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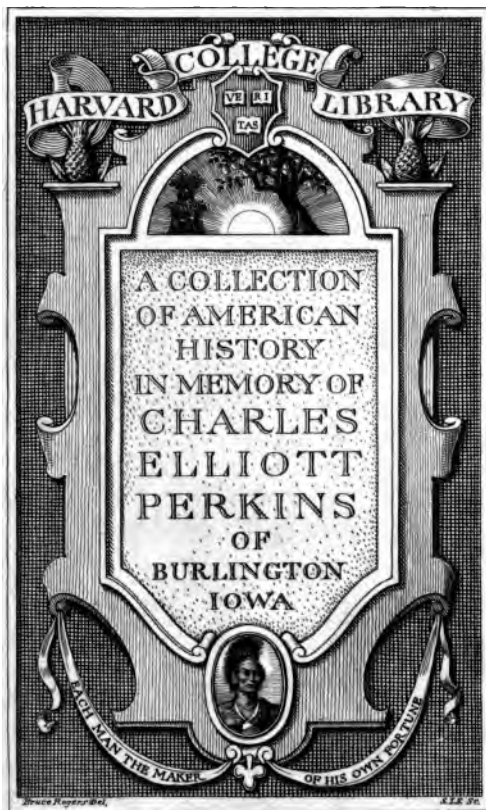
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BIRD WOMAN



JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

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By J. W. Schultz

BIRD WOMAN. Illustrated.

THE GOLD CACHE. Illustrated.

APAUK, CALLER OF BUFFALO. Illustrated.

ON THE WARPETH. Illustrated.

THE QUEST OF THE FISH-DOG SKIN. Illustrated.

SINOPAH, THE INDIAN BOY. Illustrated.

WITH THE INDIANS IN THE ROCKIES. Illustrated.

MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN. Illustrated.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

Bird Woman





I SAW RED HAIR AND HIS MEN NOT FAR AHEAD (page 198)

BIRD WOMAN

(Sacajawea)

THE GUIDE OF LEWIS AND CLARK

HER OWN STORY
NOW FIRST GIVEN TO THE WORLD BY
JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

With Illustrations



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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Published May 1918

I DEDICATE this book to my son, Hart Merriam Schultz, or Ni-tah'-mah-kwi-i (Lone Wolf), as his mother's people name him. Born near the close of the buffalo days he was, and ever since with his baby hands he began to model statuettes of horses and buffalo and deer and other animals with clay from the river-banks, his one object in life has been to make a name for himself in the world of art. And now, at last, he has furnished the drawings for one of my books, this book. His own grandfather, Black Eagle, was a mighty warrior against the Snakes. What would the old man say, I wonder, if he were alive and could see his grandson so sympathetically picturing incidents in the life of Bird Woman, a daughter of the Snakes?

JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ
(*Ap-i-kun-i*)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
March 1, 1918



SA-CA'-GA-WE-A

*Sho-sho'-ne Sa-ca'-ga-we-a — captive and wife was she
On the grassy plains of Dakota in the land of the Minnetaree;
But she heard the west wind calling, and longed to follow the sun
Back to the shining mountains and the glens where her life begun.
So, when the valiant Captains, fain for the Asian sea,
Stayed their marvellous journey in the land of the Minnetaree
(The Red Men wondering, wary — Omaha, Mandan, Sioux —
Friendly now, now hostile, as they toiled the wilderness through),
Glad she turned from the grassy plains and led their way to the West,
Her course as true as the swan's that flew north to its reedy nest;
Her eye as keen as the eagle's when the young lambs feed below;
Her ear alert as the stag's at morn guarding the fawn and doe.
Straight was she as a hillside fir, lithe as the willow-tree,
And her foot as fleet as the antelope's when the hunter rides the lea;
In brodered tunic and moccasins, with braided raven hair,
And closely belted buffalo robe with her baby nesiling there —
Girl of but sixteen summers, the homing bird of the quest,
Free of the tongues of the mountains, deep on her heart imprest,
Sho-sho'-ne Sa-ca'-ga-we-a led the way to the West! —
To Missouri's broad savannas dark with bison and deer,
While the grizzly roamed the savage shore and cougar and wolf prowled
near;
To the cataract's leap, and the meadows with lily and rose abloom;
The sunless trails of the forest, and the canyon's hush and gloom;
By the veins of gold and silver, and the mountains vast and grim —
Their snowy summits lost in clouds on the wide horizon's rim;
Through sombre pass, by soaring peak, till the Asian wind blew free,
And lo! the roar of the Oregon and the splendor of the Sea!*

*Some day, in the lordly upland where the snow-fed streams divide —
Afoam for the far Atlantic, afoam for Pacific's tide —
There, by the valiant Captains whose glory will never dim
While the sun goes down to the Asian sea and the stars in ether swim,
She will stand in bronze as richly brown as the hue of her girlish cheek,
With brodered robe and braided hair and lips just curved to speak;
And the mountain winds will murmur as they linger along the crest,
"Sho-sho'-ne Sa-ca'-ga-we-a, who led the way to the West!"*

EDNA DEAN PROCTOR

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From drawings by Hart Merriam Schultz



BIRD WOMAN

I

EARTH WOMAN AND HUGH MONROE

AWAY back in the 1870's, fired with boyish zeal for great adventure, I went from New York to Fort Benton, Montana, to see something of life on the buffalo plains. It was my good fortune to fall in at once with the late Joseph Kipp, the most noted Indian trader of the Northwest, and his mother, a full-blood Mandan, and widow of Captain James Kipp, American Fur Company Factor in the Mandan village in 1821, and later. I lived with my new-found friends for many years, and a nomadic life it was. Wherever the buffalo were most plentiful, there we were; some winters living and trading in the lodges of the Blackfeet, and other winters in hastily built but comfortable log trading-posts which we put up here and there.

In my way of thinking, it was an ideal life that we led. Wherever we roamed, from Canada south

Bird Woman

to the Yellowstone, and from the Rockies far eastward upon the plains, we felt that, in common with our Blackfeet people, the country was ours, all ours! No part of it had as yet been ploughed, nor fenced, and Fort Benton, at the head of navigation on the Missouri, was the only settlement upon it. During the busy season, from October until spring, I helped in our trade with the Blackfeet tribes for their buffalo robes and furs. At other times I hunted with my Indian friends, and even, on several occasions, went to war with them against other tribes. It was all great fun, life on the buffalo plains!

The evenings were as full of quiet enjoyment as the days were of exciting adventure. With the setting of the sun came story-telling time, and around the lodge fires, or before the mud-daubed fireplaces in our rude posts, the people gathered to smoke, and eat broiled buffalo tongues, and in turn relate weird tales of the gods, tales of war, and hunting, and of far trails, all the various happenings which made up the history of the past. Were the narrator Mandan or Arickaree, Blackfeet or white man, the conversation was always in the Blackfeet tongue. I soon mastered it, and was

Earth Woman and Hugh Monroe

then always called upon to contribute my share to the evening entertainments. And thus it was that I got from my almost-mother, Mrs. Kipp, and her equally aged companion, Crow Woman, and from Hugh Monroe, and Black Horn, an old Gros Ventre warrior, some interesting tales about Sacajawea, the heroine — yes, the savior — of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and other tales about the two great leaders and some of their men. But before relating them, I must say a few words about the narrators themselves.

Mrs. James Kipp, Sak'-wi-ah-ki, Earth Woman, was the daughter of Ma-to-to'-pa, Four Bears, one of the Mandan chiefs who welcomed Lewis and Clark to the Mandan villages in 1804, and of whom, in 1832, Catlin wrote so highly. She was born in 1803, and before her marriage to Captain Kipp, in 1821, and afterward, often heard Sacajawea relate tales of her adventure on the long trail to the Western sea, and back. And from her father and mother, and others, she got the story of the coming of the first Long Knives, Lewis and Clark and their men, to the Mandan country, and of their experiences there.

Is-sap-ah'-ki, Crow Woman, was an Arickaree,

Bird Woman

and was born in the village of that tribe, located on the Missouri, some distance below the Mandan villages. The two tribes were at times united in defense against their enemies, the Sioux, Assiniboines, Crows, and others, and so, from earliest childhood, Is-sap-ah'-ki and Sak'-wi-ah-ki were playmates and firm friends.

Soon after she was married Crow Woman went out on the plains with her man and a small party, on a buffalo hunt. They were attacked by a war party of Crows and all killed, excepting Crow Woman, who was captured by the leader of the Crows and became one of his wives, his slave wife. The Crow never treated her unkindly, but in the many years that followed, her one desire was to return to her own people. When, at last, the opportunity came, she escaped from the Crow camp, only to fall into the hands of a war party of the Kai'-na, a tribe of the Blackfeet, and its leader, Lone Otter, made her his third wife. More years passed, and then, one spring, when the Kai'-na came to Fort Benton to trade, Crow Woman heard Mrs. Kipp speak to her son in the Mandan language, and ran to her, stared at her, and cried in that, to her, almost forgotten tongue: "Oh,

Earth Woman and Hugh Monroe

who are you? Are you not Ma-to-to'-pa's daughter?"

"Yes! Yes! And you — who are you that speaks to me in my own language?"

"I? Why, I am Crow Woman! Your Arickaree friend in the long ago," she cried. And at that the two embraced and wept tears of joy.

A little later, when Crow Woman had told her her story, Mrs. Kipp asked her if she was contented with her lot.

"I have no children of my own," she replied, "but I love my almost-daughter, the daughter of a dead wife of Lone Otter. I have raised the child. I love her as though she were my very own. But for her, I would long ago have again tried to escape and return to my people."

"Your relatives, and mine too, are all dead. But you shall be free. Before the setting of this sun you shall be free, and you shall remain with me so long as we live!" Mrs. Kipp cried. And she went at once to Lone Otter, and bargained with him, and paid him a fabulous price, thirty horses, a gun, ten blankets, and much tobacco, for Crow Woman and his daughter that she loved.

Would that I could have been present at the

Bird Woman

meeting of those long-parted friends! Their life together, and their love for their adopted daughter were simply ideal. After the buffalo were exterminated, and we settled down at Fort Conrad, the old women and the girl planted a garden by the river each season, and laboriously watered the hills of corn, beans, and squash with buckets which they carried up the steep bank. Beside the garden they built a shelter of boughs to protect them from the sun, and from which to watch their growing crops, and thither I went on hot afternoons, to sit with them and listen to their tales of the long ago. And while they talked they did wonderfully beautiful colored porcupine quill embroidery work on buffalo leather and buffalo robes that remained to us after our trade had vanished. One piece of work that they undertook required two summers to complete it! It was a huge sun, embroidered in all the colors of the rainbow on the flesh side of a fine head and tail buffalo cow robe!

Here, to this garden shelter by the river, also came Hugh Monroe, or Mah-kwi'-i-pwo-ahts, Rising Wolf, to exchange reminiscences with his old-time women friends. And as I sat and listened to them I thanked my stars that I was there, and

Earth Woman and Hugh Monroe

that I understood the Blackfeet language as well as they did. Monroe could not speak Mandan nor Arickaree; they could not understand English. The Blackfeet was the language common to us all.

Hugh Monroe, or Rising Wolf, as he was best known, was the son of Captain Hugh Monroe, of the English army, and Amélie Monroe, a daughter of the De la Roche family, French émigrés in Canada. He was born in Three Rivers, Province of Quebec, July 9, 1798, and on May 3, 1814, was apprenticed to the Hudson's Bay Company. In the following spring he arrived at the Company's post, Mountain Fort, on Bow River, the main fork of the South Saskatchewan River. He was immediately detailed to live with the Pi-kun'-i, the so-called Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet confederacy, and a few days later went south with it for the winter. He was the first white man to see the great plains and mountains that lie between the upper reaches of the Saskatchewan and the Missouri rivers. He soon married a daughter of Lone Walker, head chief of the tribe, by whom he had a fine family of stalwart sons and daughters. Not long after his marriage he severed his connections with the Hudson's Bay Company, became a "free

Bird Woman

trapper," and lived for the most of the time with his chosen people, the Pi-kun'-i, to the time of his death, in 1896. He was a man of high character, and was loved by all who knew him.

Earth Woman, Crow Woman, and Rising Wolf, what wonderful changes they witnessed as they grew from youth to old age! They saw the very beginning of the great fur trade in the Northwest, and its end with the extinction of the buffalo, and the near-extirpation of the beaver! They saw the keel boats and the batteaux of the early traders give way to powerful "fire boats" on the Saskatchewan and the Missouri, and these in turn superseded by railways that brought hordes of settlers to the broad plains!

Perhaps the crowning event of their long lives was a trip by rail to Great Falls after it had become a city. I there talked with them over the telephone, and they marveled! In the evening I gave them a ride on the electric cars, and finally took them to the power house; there they saw red-blue-green flashes of electricity playing about the dynamos, and were completely overcome with astonishment!

"I am sick, heartsick!" Earth Woman ex-

Earth Woman and Hugh Monroe

claimed after we had gone out. "All my life I have prayed to the gods, as my father and mother taught me to do. And now, this night, I have seen with my own eyes that white men, and not Thunder Bird, are makers of the lightning. Perhaps there is no Thunder Bird! Perhaps there are no gods! The sun himself, maybe he is nothing but a ball of fire, by white men set rolling across the sky to make the days!"

"Hush! sister, hush!" Crow Woman told her. "Doubt not! What if the white men do make lightning? That has nothing to do with us — with our beliefs! Our ancient ones *saw* Thunder Bird! — heard him thunder as he arose in flight, saw his lightning flashes. Thunder Bird lives! So do all our gods! Take courage! Keep strong your faith in them!"

The next morning Earth Woman was herself again: she had prayed to the gods, made sacrifices to them, and her doubts and fears had vanished. After breakfast we all stood upon an upper piazza of the hotel and looked down upon the city and the near-by river. Crow Woman pointed across it to the mouth of Sun River and said: "Just above the place where the two rivers join,

Bird Woman

just a little way up the smaller stream, is where the Kai'-na captured me!"

"Ai! And here, just about where this sleeping and eating house stands, I onced saved Jim Bridger and his band of trappers from being attacked and killed by a war party of five hundred North Black-feet! I often ran buffalo where are now all these houses!" said Rising Wolf.

"Right out there, to the still water just above the falls, came Sacajawea with the first Long Knives," said Earth Woman. "For days and days, so she told me, they rolled their boats on log wheels up the long trail from below the lower falls to this point, and launching them, went on up the river. I know just how the Snake woman felt; how anxious she was to go on, hoping that, at the head of the river or on the other slope of the mountains, she would meet her people. Day and night she prayed the gods, made sacrifices to them, to guide her to them!"

"Ai! And she did meet them! And induced them to be friends with the Long Knives!" Rising Wolf exclaimed. "But for her there would have been a gathering of the Snake tribes to kill off the white men, and they would have been killed, every

Earth Woman and Hugh Monroe

one of them. I know! But I have told you the story of it, as the Snake chief told it to me in the long ago."

Well, they are gone, Rising Wolf, Earth Woman, Crow Woman, and a host of other friends in the old buffalo days! Did they find the Shadow Land, I wonder, and their shadow people, living in shadow lodges, and on shadow horses running shadow buffalo?

Glad I am that I knew them, gentle, honest, generous friends that they were! And glad I am that through them I am able to add something to our knowledge of Sacajawea and Lewis and Clark and their men.

And now, to turn on the light, let us begin with Rising Wolf's story of Bird Woman.

II

HUGH MONROE AND THE SNAKE CHIEF

IN the summer of 1816, my second year on the plains, I again went south from Mountain Fort with the Pi-kun'-i. We moved leisurely from stream to stream along the foot of the Rockies, trapping beavers, and winter struck us when camped on Sun River.

After about a foot of snow had fallen, and there was little danger of war parties being abroad, my almost-brother, Red Crow, and I obtained permission from his father, Chief Lone Walker, to go south to Deep Creek on a trapping expedition. One of the chief's wives, Rattle Woman, and his daughter, Mink Woman, a girl of about fourteen winters, went with us to keep our lodge in shape and to flesh and dry the skins of the beavers that we should catch. We made camp on the creek, at the foot of the mountains, and were there surprised by a number of Snake Indians suddenly entering our lodge. They came, they said, from the camp of their people, on the next stream to the west. They



RED CROW WENT WITH THE PEACE MESSENGERS

Monroe and the Snake Chief

had seen us make camp, knew that we were Blackfeet, and their chief, Black Lance, begged us to take pity upon him and his children. They were all very poor, very hungry. Would we not aid them in making peace with the Blackfeet, and in obtaining permission for them to remain on the Blackfeet plains during the winter and kill what Blackfeet buffalo they needed?

We agreed to do what they asked, and the next day Red Crow went with the peace messengers to his father, a council was held, and peace was made between the two tribes, it being agreed that the Snakes should camp beside the Pi-kun'-i, and kill all the game that they needed. They were not, however, to trap beavers or other fur animals.

Peace being declared, I became quite friendly with Black Lance, the Snake chief. I was very anxious to learn if there were any opposition traders in his country; so, on the first evening that I visited him, the evening following the departure of his peace messengers, with Red Crow, for the camp on Sun River, I signed to him: "You say that you are friendly to white men. Tell me about those that you know, and where they camp?" I must explain that all our talk was in the sign language.

Bird Woman

"We know but few," he answered. "Far to the south, we have met a few white men that are not white.¹ They are almost as red-skinned as we are, and their hair is black. They have many horses and mules; plenty of guns; plenty of long, sharp-pointed lances. They wear shirts of woven iron which no arrows nor lances will pierce. They will not sell us guns, and so we raid their herds and take their guns whenever that is possible. But we are very poor. In our whole tribe there are only twenty guns, and they are useless, as we have no food for them.

"We know a few real white men: Two chiefs, Long Knife and Red Hair, and their thirty followers, one of whom is a black white man. I do not lie to you. Truly, his skin is as black as a coal, and his short hair is black and curls tightly to his head! Strange are the ways of the gods! They caused one of our women, a woman we had given up for dead, to bring these white men to us. I must tell you all about it."

Here the chief made the sign for a name: the fingers of the right hand tightly closed, thumb extended, and placed against the forehead, the hand then raised upward and outward with a graceful

¹ Spaniards.

Monroe and the Snake Chief

sweep. He then made the sign for grass: right hand held out, palm up, fingers and thumb separated and turned up, and then the hand moved from left to right in front of the body. Next, he made the sign for woman: fingers of both hands touching on top of the head, and then the hands parting and moving downward on each side of the head, meaning parted hair. What he signed, then, was, "Name, Grass Woman." And as he made the signs he said, orally, three times, "Bo-i'-naiv! Bo-i'-naiv! Bo-i'-naiv!" And then signed on — "Did you ever hear of her?"

"No! I know nothing about her," I answered. But right then I knew that the white men were Lewis and Clark and their men. And I was to learn all about them, and how a Snake woman, named Grass Woman, had brought them to her people. I was more than impatient for him to begin the story. He expressed great surprise that I had never heard of her, and then went on: —

"Yes, that was her name, Grass Woman. Later we called her Lost Woman, and still later, after the great happening, we named her Water-White-Men Woman." He paused, thought intently for a moment or two, and continued: "I will both make the

Bird Woman

signs for the three names, and speak them. Repeat them after me."

In signs: "Grass Woman." Orally: "Bo-i'-naiv."

In signs: "Lost Woman." Orally: "Wad-zi-wip'."

In signs: "Water-White-Men Woman." Orally: "Bah-rai'-bo!"

Over and over I repeated the words after him: "Bo-i'-naiv! Wad-zi-wip'! Bah-rai'-bo!" And then again signed: "No, I have never heard of her!"

"You shall know all!" he signed.

"It was twenty winters back. We were camped in our own country, on the other side of the mountains. Elk and deer became very few, and we began to starve; we grew very thin. Summer came and still we starved; so our chiefs decided that we must go out upon the buffalo plains of the Blackfeet or die where we were from hunger. We should probably, they said, be killed off by the Blackfeet, but it was better to die with a full belly, and quickly, than to die slowly from want of food.

"We packed up and crossed the summit of the great mountains, descended the North Fork of the Big-River-of-the-Plains,¹ and made camp just

¹ The Jefferson, northernmost of the three forks of the Missouri.

Monroe and the Snake Chief

above its junction with the two other forks of the stream. There we came upon some buffalo, killed a number of them, and feasted. Three mornings later, when most of our men were scattered out on the hunt, a large war party was discovered coming up the valley, and the women and children, and what few men there were in camp, fled before it. Many of them scattered out in the brush and hid themselves and were not discovered. Others, crazed with fear, ran on and on up the trail in the valley, and the enemy, pursuing them, killed four men, four women, and seven youths, and captured four boys and five girls. Then, rounding up a large herd of our horses, they rode off down the valley. In time all the boys and all but three of the girls escaped from their captors, and then we learned that the enemy had not been Blackfeet, as we thought, but had come from one of the villages of the Earth House people. They live far down in the valley of the Big-River-of-the-Plains, at the eastern edge of the country of the Blackfeet.

“Our people mourned a long time for their dead. The mother of Grass Woman, one of the girls who were captured and did not return, lost also her man in the fight. There remained to her two sons

Bird Woman

and one daughter, but the mother grieved for her lost man and daughter, and soon died from mourning for them.

"The summers came and went. War parties of Blackfeet and of the Earth House people often came into our country, fought us, and ran off herds of our horses. We were always hungry in our country; often we starved there. When we could, when winters came and we were not likely to be discovered, we would come out here, where we are now, and hunt buffalo, and live well. It was eleven summers back that the sky gods became angry and allowed no rain to fall upon our country, not even one little rain. We prayed to them, made sacrifices to them, but still they withheld the rain. So it was that the berry bushes were barren that summer, and the dry earth produced but a few small roots. There was no grass for our horses except in a few damp places. Came winter again, and what few deer and elk there were, left our country. We could not tell what way they went; we moved south, found a few bands of them, and during the winter killed them all. When summer came again we were very weak, and some of the weakest were dying from starvation.

Monroe and the Snake Chief

“With the first sprouting of the new grass we moved slowly northward, and then to the pass at the head of the North Fork of the Big-River-of-the-Plains. We found no buffalo there, only a few elk and deer, and they were very wild. With only bows and arrows we could kill but few of them. We lived mostly upon roots, and kept looking out toward the plains, well knowing that they were covered with buffalo, but, because of the Black-feet, we were afraid to venture out there. We remained where we were, hoping that in time the buffalo would come up the North Fork.

“Day after day, while we camped there, we kept a man on the trail in the valley of the North Fork, watching for the enemy, and for the hoped-for coming of the buffalo. One morning this watcher discovered three men on foot approaching him. They were strangely dressed. From their appearance he believed them to be white men. From tribes to the west of us we had learned that there were white-skinned men. They had come in big boats on the Everywhere-Salt-Water, to the mouth of our Big River, and had there traded goods, even a few guns, to the tribes who go about in log canoes and who live upon fish.

Bird Woman

"The watcher saw that one white man was on the trail, and that away off to each side of him three others skulked along in the brush. The one on the trail waved to him, made peace signs, and he sat on his horse and allowed him to come quite near, near enough for him to see that he really was a white man. But all the time the others were sneaking on through the brush, as though with intent to capture him. Fear overcame him; he turned his horse and fled up the valley, called his family together, and led them off up a branch stream, there to hide until the white men should have disappeared. He did not come over the pass to us, as he should have done.

"Two days later, down on our side of the pass, one of our men and his women, out digging roots, discovered the four white men and hurried to our camp with the news. The white men kept on down the trail, and suddenly came upon two women and a girl who were digging roots. The young woman fled from them. The two others could not run; they just sat where they were, expecting to be struck on the head and killed. But no! The lead white man came up to them, took the old woman by the hands, raised her to her feet, and

Monroe and the Snake Chief

signed to her that he was of white skin and meant her no harm. He at once gave her presents; wonderful presents, the like of which had never been seen by our people. Most wonderful of all was a flat, smooth square of ice-rock in which she could see her face. She looked into it, saw her old, wrinkled cheeks, her sunken eyes, the worn-down teeth in her jaws, and sank to the ground in horror of herself. But again the white man raised her up, gave her other presents, beads, awls, and paint, and she forgot her fears, and called to the young woman to return. When she came the white man gave her presents, too, and then painted the cheeks of the women and the little girl with red paint, very bright red paint. One of the men with this chief was half white, half Indian, and a good sign-talker. He signed to the women, and asked them to lead the way to their camp. They signed back that they would do so and started off down the trail.

"Now, when the man digging roots with his women discovered the four strangers, he rode as fast as he could down to our camp and cried out that enemies were coming. We at once mounted our horses, and following our chief, Black Bow, hurried up the trail to meet them and kill them off.

Bird Woman

But what was our surprise, as we neared them, to see that they were different from our enemies of the plains. They wore different clothing; one of them carried a beautiful red, white, and blue peace-waver tied to a long stick. We rode still closer to them and saw that their skins were white! Our women with them cried out that they were good men, and held up before us the presents they had received. We all dismounted, and, after our chief, in turn embraced the white men. We then gathered in a circle, took off our moccasins, and smoked, and talked with the newcomers in the sign language, and they explained that they had come from far east; that their great white chief had sent them to find a trail through the mountains to the shore of the Everywhere-Salt-Water, and to make peace with all the tribes along the way, and to get them to make peace with one another.

“After three pipes were smoked, the white chief, he whom we afterward called Red Hair,¹ gave us presents, handing Black Bow also the peace-waver, and said that, as the day was hot, and there was no water where we were, he would like us to take him and his men to our camp. We at once sent

¹ Captain Clark.

Monroe and the Snake Chief

some young men ahead to fix up for them the one real lodge that we had, and then took the trail with the strangers. We arrived in camp some time before sunset, and Black Bow took the strangers to the lodge and told them that it was their lodge. After they had rested for a time, we held another council with them, and they then told us that more of their kind were coming up the Big-River-of-the-Plains in boats, and that with them was a woman of our tribe who had long ago been captured by our enemy, the Earth House people. They asked that we take plenty of horses and go to meet the party and pack their property to our camp.

“‘It is a forked tongue that this white chief has,’ said one of our old warriors. ‘I doubt not that there are white men in boats across there on the river, but something tells me that there are with them a multitude of our plains enemies. If we do as we are asked, we go straight to our death!’

“At once there was much talk in that council lodge. Some of the warriors agreed with the old man, that the white men were trying to draw them into a trap. Said another warrior: ‘If all is just as these white men say, then they are, after all, but a

Bird Woman

small party. They are rich in the things that we most need, guns and powder and ball, with which to defend ourselves from the attacks of our plains enemies. I propose that we at once send messengers to the other tribes of our Snake Nation, and to our friends, the Flatheads, and ask them to come and help us wipe out these white men, and take their property.'

"'Yes! Yes! That is what we should do! Let us send the messengers at once!' cried one man after another, until nearly all had spoken. Then said our chief, Black Bow: 'You speak wisely. If we can take all the white men's guns, with the great quantity of powder and ball that they surely have, we can go out on the plains, hold our own against our enemies, and get all the buffalo that we want. Let the messengers go at once for help. And, to hasten matters, let us do what the white men ask: we will take horses and bring their men and their property up here. We shall then have them right here in our camp, where we can take them unaware, and easily kill them off. Now, who will furnish horses and go with the white men and me to-morrow?'

"Many of the warriors answered that they would

Monroe and the Snake Chief

take extra horses and go with him, but, during the night, a great fear came upon most of them, fear that they were to be led into a trap, that back of the whites were hundreds of their plains enemies, either Blackfeet or Earth House people, or both. In the morning, when the time came to leave, but eight men started out with our chief and the white men, and I was one of the eight. We had not traveled far, however, when we were overtaken by many of the afraid ones, some of them accompanied by their women. After we left the camp, Black Bow's woman had grieved for him, and then, crying out that she was not a coward, that she was braver than the men, had caught a horse and made ready to follow our trail. And because she shamed them the best of the men and women hurried to catch up their horses and take the trail with her.

"On that first day out we crossed over the pass in the mountains and made camp by some springs high up on the east slope of the mountains. On the next morning, as soon as we were ready to go on, the white man chief sent two of his men ahead, saying that they were to hunt, and asking us to keep with him, so that the game would not become alarmed. This alarmed us; we thought that

Bird Woman

the two men were being sent to tell the enemy to be ready to spring upon us. Many of our people turned back right there, and we who went on sent several of our men forward on each side of the valley to keep watch of the two white hunters. They really were hunters; during the day they killed some deer and gave us most of the meat. When evening came we were thinking that, perhaps, the white men meant us no harm; that everything was just as they had said.

“On the next morning we arose very early, and the white chief at once sent one of his men, and one of us with him, to look for the white men who were coming up the river in boats. I went off by myself, keeping close to the river, and soon saw the white men, all of them working hard to drag and push their boats up the swift water. I ran back to camp, crying out that I had seen the whites, and then we all hurried on to meet them. By that time they had come quite close to our camp. Two of the whites were on the shore, away ahead of the boats, and with them was a woman. One of our women ran forward, other women followed her, and when we saw them embrace the lone woman, we knew that it was as the white chief had told us, that there

Monroe and the Snake Chief

was one of our women in his party. Right there we lost all of our fears: had there been plains enemies with the whites, this woman would have so signed to us as soon as we came in sight. The two white men came on. One of them was the other chief of the party, he whom we named Long Knife. Our chief, Black Bow, embraced him, and so did the rest of us, and then we led the white chiefs to one of our brush shelters for a council. We took off our moccasins, the pipe was lighted, and then Red Hair told one of his men to bring the Snake woman to interpret for us.

“She came, this young woman, with her little child in her arms, came with downcast eyes, with hesitating steps, and timidly sat just without our half-circle. I looked at her, so did the others, and none of us recognized her. Black Bow at once opened the council: ‘Woman,’ said he, ‘interpret these my words: White men chiefs, we are glad that you are coming to our country!’

“As he said that, the woman for the first time looked up at him, and then, leaving her child, she sprang across the circle and embraced him. Laughing and crying, at the same time trembling as though from cold, she arose and placed her blanket

Bird Woman

across his shoulders, then again knelt beside him, and cried: 'Oh, brother! Do you not know me? I am your sister, Grass Woman!'

"'So you are! So you are!' Black Bow exclaimed, and in turn embraced her. And some of us cried out: 'She is Grass Woman! Our *Lost Woman*! She has returned to us!'

"Then, still trembling, and trying to dry her eyes, she asked her brother to give her news of her relatives, and he answered: 'Our father was killed by the enemies that took you from us.'

"'Yes, I know,' Grass Woman said. 'As the enemy bore me away, I saw his body lying beside the trail!'

"'Grieving for our father, and for you, our mother soon died. Then our sister died, then our brother, Middle Sun. Of all our family there remain only our brother, Little Otter, whom I have sent with a message to our Snake peoples, and our little nephew, son of our sister, Deer Robe!'

"Now, when Grass Woman heard that, she broke out crying again. Sitting there with her arms on her brother's shoulder, she wept bitterly. But suddenly one of the white men spoke to her angrily. 'It is my man. He orders me back to my

Monroe and the Snake Chief

place to interpret. Badly as I feel, I must obey him,' she told Black Bow, and returned to her child. But, try as she would, she could not stop crying, so the council was put off until later in the day.

"Came now the rest of the white men, with their boats, and made camp, and we watched them, and near went crazy with wonder at them and the strange and useful things that they had! One of those white men was black. We could not believe that his skin was not covered with a shining black paint, until one of us washed his forearm, scrubbing and scrubbing it without result. We were struck with the number of different shaped kettles and other utensils in which the white men cooked their food. We marveled at the number of fine long guns they carried; and, oh, how we wanted to see what was in the many bundles that they carried from the boats to their camp! They had sharp, heavy, wood-handled pieces of shiny hard rock with which they cut wood; with but a few blows of one of them, they cut down good-sized trees. That was great medicine!

"Now, while the white men fixed up their camp, Black Bow talked with his sister, and we sat by them and listened. She told about her life with our

Bird Woman

enemies and of her marriage to the white man. But what most interested us was what she said about the riches of her captors and the ease in which they lived. Their homes were large earth-covered lodges which the severest cold of winter could not penetrate. Near their lodges they raised each summer great quantities of good food plants, which they dried for winter use. Their plains were always covered with buffalo and antelope. The timbered valley of their Big River was full of elk and deer. They knew not what it was to hunger or suffer from cold.

“Neither should we suffer from hunger and cold nor fear our enemies if we had guns!’ the chief cried out. ‘Well, we shall have guns! Little sister, when our brother and the other messengers return, bringing with them the warriors of our Snake tribes to help us, we shall kill these white men and take their guns and their great store of powder and ball, and then go out and live on the buffalo plains!’

“Grass Woman gave a cry of distress and shrank away from him: ‘You are crazy even to think of doing that,’ she told him. ‘What if you do take them unaware while they sleep and kill them off?’

Monroe and the Snake Chief

Of what use would the guns be that you would get, thirty or forty of them, against the two hundred and more guns of the Earth House people? Brother, you must do all that you can for these white men, for they are men of great heart and your true friends. Have they not told you why they have come into this country, that they are here to get all tribes to make peace with one another? Have they not told you that they come to make a trail for white traders to follow, so that you may all have guns and traps and other things that you need to make yourselves rich and comfortable?’

“‘Yes, they said all that to us, but we did not believe them,’ Black Bow answered.

“‘Then believe it now! I, your true sister, tell you that it is so!’

“‘Truly, my mind is all in a whirl. I must think about this!’ the chief exclaimed.

“By this time the white men had set up their camp, and they now invited us to it to counsel with them. We were seated under a shelter of cloth and willows, where we took off our moccasins and smoked by turns one pipe. The white chief named Long Knife then spoke to us, Grass Woman’s man telling her what he said, and she in turn interpret-

Bird Woman

ing the words to us. He told us that his great white chief had sent him and his men to make friends with all tribes all the way to the Everywhere-Salt-Water, and to get them to make peace with one another. He hoped that we would make peace with the tribes with whom we were at war, for that would please the great white chief, and he would send men with guns, traps, and all kinds of goods to trade to us, and ever afterward we should have plenty of everything, food, clothing, warm lodges, tobacco, and we could roam where we pleased without fear of attack. And now he asked us to help him: he wanted horses, plenty of our horses for riding and packing on his way westward from our country, and he would pay us well for them.

“Then said Black Bow to Grass Woman: ‘Sister, had you not told me that these men are of straight tongue and good heart, I should not have believed anything that they told us. I now do believe. I am sure it is all as you say, that they mean only good for us. You may tell them that we will furnish them horses, that we shall do all that we can for them, and that we hope their traders will soon come to us with plenty of guns, traps, and goods of all kinds.’

Monroe and the Snake Chief

“‘Brother, you really mean that — is it straight from your heart?’ Grass Woman asked.

“‘It is!’ he answered.

“‘Then send other messengers at once to our Snake people and the Flatheads, to tell them to remain where they are, for the white men are their friends, and that they are to travel safely through our country,’ she demanded.

“‘They shall start this day,’ he agreed. And at that she embraced him, and, through her man, told the whites that the chief said that all should be as they wished, and that he hoped traders would come to them as soon as possible. Thereupon the council ended, and the white chiefs gave us valuable and beautiful presents. Black Bow was given a beautiful suit of white chief clothes and a medal, and we all received shirts, leggins, knives, tobacco, medals, looking-glasses, and awls. And last we were feasted with big dishes of a boiled plant that our Grass Woman told us had been raised by her Earth House people captors. Next to good meat, it was the best food we had ever eaten.

“‘There were not enough horses with us to move all the property of the white men, so we took Red

Bird Woman

Hair and some of his men and Grass Woman across the pass to our main camp, and then sent some of our young men with plenty of horses to bring over the rest of the party and all their property.

"Now, before Grass Woman was captured by our plains enemies, she had been given by her father and mother to a man of our tribe named Little Mountain. She was to become his wife when she grew up. Returning now to the camp, after a long visit to one of our tribes, he heard that she was there and ran about until he found her. 'Ha! There you are, Grass Woman, Lost Woman!' he cried. 'You have grown up, I see. You look strong and you are handsome. Well, I am glad of it because I need you. Get whatever things you have and come over with me to my shelter.'

"'I shall not go with you! You are nothing to me!' Grass Woman told him.

"'You are my woman! You shall go with me! I gave your father three horses, and he promised that I should have you as soon as you became a woman,' he insisted.

"'I will prove to you that I am not your woman,' she told him, and, throwing open her blanket, she

Monroe and the Snake Chief

held up to his view her little child: 'See. That is my boy, and that white man there is my man and its father!'

"'Ha! That makes it different! I do not want you!' Little Mountain told her, and turned and went his way.

"As Black Bow had promised his sister we should do, that we did for the Long Knives. We furnished them the horses that they needed and a man to guide them through our country, and they went on their way toward the Everywhere-Salt-Water. We heard afterward that they had great difficulty in passing through the mountains; that they could find no game, and would have starved to death had they not killed and eaten some of the horses that we gave them. Well, they made their way to the shore of the Great Water, and there wintered, and in the following summer returned and went on eastward, and we have not even heard of them again. Summer after summer we have looked for the white traders that they promised to send to us with plenty of guns for us to buy, but the summers pass and they do not come. Tell me, white youth, do you think that they ever will come?"

"I cannot answer that," I told him. "I have no

Bird Woman

knowledge of the Long Knife traders. Myself, I am a Red Coat trader. At our post in the North we have plenty of guns, traps, all kinds of things to trade to you if you will go there with your furs."

The chief made a gesture of despair. "That we can never do," he signed. "The Blackfeet tribes will never permit us to do that! If they now allow us to camp out here until green grass time and kill a few of their buffalo, it will be more than we ever expected of them. Summer will soon come again, and back we must go across the mountains, there in hunger to hide from the war parties of Blackfeet, Earth House people, Assiniboines, Crees, who come to kill us and take our horses. White youth, we Snakes are a poor and most unhappy people!"

Well, what answer could I make to that, except to sign to him that he must take courage? My heart went out to him and his harried people, but I could do nothing. I knew, even better than he did, that the Blackfeet never would give the Snakes an opportunity to trade for guns if they could prevent it.

III

MONROE STARTS ON HIS MISSION AND MEETS SACAJAWEA

NOW, upon leaving the North with the Pi-kun'-i, our factor, Terrible Tongue, as the Blackfeet called Hardesty, had charged me to do everything in my power to bring about peace between the Pi-kun'-i and the Cheyennes, and to induce the latter to come north with us in the spring and trade at Mountain Fort. This was no small task that had been imposed upon me. The Blackfeet tribes had ever been at war with the Cheyennes, who were themselves a powerful plains people, great trappers and tanners of robes, and owners of large herds of horses. Indeed, the Blackfeet name for them was Spotted Horses people, on account of the strain of pinto horses that they particularly bred, and which the Blackfeet raided at every opportunity. Naturally, the Blackfeet, and particularly the Pi-kun'-i, southernmost of the tribes, did not wish to make peace with a people from whom they took the beautiful

Bird Woman

pinto animals. They were foes worth keeping as foes.

To begin with, I had but four helpers, my almost-brother, Red Crow, my almost-sister, Mink Woman, and Bird Woman, son, daughter, and head wife, respectively, of the great chief, Lone Walker, in whose charge I was and in one of whose lodges I lived. Lone Walker was a great chief. He had nineteen wives, living in two lodges, and many children and hundreds of horses. He had, of course, a council of under chiefs, but they always agreed to whatever he decided was best to be done. My other helper was a noted medicine man, brother to Bird Woman, named Red Eagle. These four agreed to do all that they could to bring about peace with the Cheyennes.

As I expected, when I mentioned the matter to Lone Walker, he told me at once that there could be no thought of peace with the Cheyennes. This much I knew about them: they roamed the plains south and east of the Yellowstone, and traded their furs and robes to the Earth House tribes, who lived in fortified villages on the Missouri, below the mouth of the Yellowstone. With these tribes the Blackfeet had ever been upon friendly terms,

Monroe meets Sacajawea

and Lone Walker had some especially close friends in the chiefs of the Grouse people, or, as the whites called them, the Mandans. As a possible way of getting in touch with the Cheyennes, Red Crow and I began importuning Lone Walker to allow us to visit the Mandans. At first he merely laughed at our request, but we kept at him about it, and he finally agreed that we might go if we could find some of his proved warriors to accompany us, and that we could take with us some presents for his friends. The camp crier was accordingly told to make the round of the lodges and call for volunteers to go with us, but we got no response to the call and were in despair, when, several evenings later, a man named Heavy Robe, and nicknamed Never Talks, came into our lodge and told Lone Walker that he would go with us to the Earth House tribes. Red Crow and I could hardly believe our ears. That Heavy Robe, of all men, should propose to take us on the long trail was almost too good for belief.

“I am very glad that you will go with my boys,” Lone Walker told him. “I wanted three or four men, but you are as good as four. When will you be ready to start?”

Bird Woman

"Whenever you give the word."

"Then, leave day after to-morrow morning," the chief decided.

Heavy Robe arose, wrapped his robe about him, said, shortly, "I shall be ready at that time," and went out with never a word to Red Crow and me.

A strange, a very strange man was Heavy Robe. He was about thirty-five years of age, tall, well-built, even handsome, but he had never married and lived with his widowed mother. He was not a member of any band of the All Friends Society; he never visited about, never joined in the camp dances, and had no close friend. However, he had the respect of every man, woman, and child in the great camp. He always went alone to war, and always returned with horses and property — and scalps of the enemy. And he was a great hunter. When not off on a raid, he hunted all the time; hardly a day passed but his old mother was to be seen carrying meat, or a hide of some kind, to one or another of the lodges of the sick or the widowed and fatherless. Very kind-hearted was Heavy Robe, quite the opposite of what, from his quiet, taciturn manner, his shunning of people, one would have expected him to be.

Monroe meets Sacajawea

Now, you may think that this has nothing to do with Sacajawea. But wait!

We got an early start on the appointed morning, and made quite a cavalcade as we set out, for we each took an extra saddle horse, and with them four fine horses and a pack-load of goods, which Lone Walker and his under chiefs were sending, with many messages of peace and good-will, to the chiefs of the tribes we were to visit.

It was a long, long way that we had to go, to the villages below the mouth of the Yellowstone. We struck the Musselshell River, followed it down to the Missouri, and then followed the windings of its deep and timbered valley, for the snow was too deep for traveling upon the plains, and below the mouth of the Musselshell it became so deep that we could not travel at all except in the winding, hard-beaten trails of the buffalo and other game. Day after day we went on and on, ever in sight of countless herds of game, but finding no enemies to bar our way. Every evening, near sundown, we made a comfortable camp, and cut quantities of cottonwood browse for our horses. Then, after our hearty meal of broiled meat, Heavy Robe would get out his medicine pipe, which had, when in use,

Bird Woman

always to be rested upon a buffalo skull, and he had us smoke with him and pray to the gods for success in our journey, and for the long life, good health, and happiness of all the Blackfeet people. His own medicine — his vision, his secret helper — was ancient raven. He made especial appeals to it to ask the gods of the sky, the earth, and the deep waters, to favor us in all our undertakings. As the snow was too deep for us to find a buffalo skull for a pipe-rest at every camp we made, we packed one in our outfit for that purpose. We said nothing to our leader about our desire to meet the Cheyennes, and to induce them to make peace with our people; the time had not come for that, nor did we have the slightest idea how we could meet them. "Just trust in the gods; they will show us the way!" Red Crow kept telling me.

All went well with us until one evening, several days after we had passed the mouth of the Yellowstone, we were about to make camp when a bitterly cold, suddenly rising, north wind brought to us the strong odor of cottonwood smoke. "Ha! We must be near the Earth House people!" I said.

Heavy Robe looked back at me and motioned me to be silent. Then, after looking ahead for some

Monroe meets Sacajawea

time, he said to us: "If this smoke were coming from a village, we should hear the sounds of it; people talking, children shouting, — anyhow, the barking of dogs. The odor of the smoke is very strong; it is coming from a fire in this grove of timber; either enemies are close ahead of us or a party of hunters from the Earth House villages!"

"What shall we do?" Red Crow asked.

"There is but one thing to do," our leader answered. "We will go on. It may be that we can circle around the camp without being seen. We will try to do so. Look to the priming of your guns! Be watchful!" And with that he led on, branching out from trail to trail away from the river. The wind, with its odor of smoke, came to us in eddying swirls, sometimes in our faces, sometimes on our right or left; we could not determine from it just where the fire was, but we believed it to be in the lower part of the grove and near the river.

On this day I was in the rear of the line, with four horses between me and Red Crow, who was driving the rest of the loose stock close after Heavy Robe. We had not gone on more than a couple of hundred yards, when, suddenly, I heard, rather than felt, something plunk into the lower flap of

Bird Woman

my robe in front of my left thigh, and at the same time my horse made a sudden leap that threw me back upon him behind the saddle. I should have gone clear off had I not been pinned to the horse: an arrow in my robe and into his wither pinned me to him. As I jounced back into the saddle with a yell, I looked around and saw a man in a side trail, not fifty yards away. He was fitting a fresh arrow to his bow, and farther out in the grove a dozen men were coming on the run on his trail, holding their weapons ready to attack us. As I fired at the first man, and he fell, one of the others, the only one of them who had a gun, fired and shot down the horse directly in front of me. At that my horse flinched back and I had no little difficulty in making him leap the obstruction. I passed it just as Red Crow and Heavy Robe fired, and out of the corner of my eye, so to speak, I saw another one of the enemy go down. We drew away from them as fast as we could go, their arrows dropping harmlessly behind us.

The snow was so deep that the enemy could not come directly after us from the side trail they were in; they had to follow it up to its junction with our trail and then turn down the main trail. We soon

Monroe meets Sacajawea

passed out of sight of them. Nevertheless, they kept after us, yelling all the time, and by that we knew that the rest of their party were somewhere ahead of us, gathered around the fire from which came the smoke, now stronger than ever in our nostrils.

We all wore heavy buffalo-robe mittens attached to a long buckskin thong passing over our shoulders, so that we could instantly release our hands from them and they would still be in place when we wanted to slip them on again. But, convenient as that was, we nearly froze our hands while firing our guns and then reloading them. We had no more than finished loading when we saw forty or fifty men ahead, right in our trail and running toward us. Between them and us was no branch trail, and, noting that, Heavy Robe called out that we must turn back and take a branch trail that we had just passed. I turned my horse at once and so became the leader. But it was no easy task for Red Crow and Heavy Robe to turn the loose animals about to follow me. We lost time, and a cloud of arrows and one gunshot were discharged at us by the lower enemy party while we were making the turnabout.

As soon as Heavy Robe had his part of the loose

Bird Woman

stock turned and following Red Crow, he stopped his animal, and fired back and killed the lead man of the enemy. He then came on, hurrying to overtake us, and as he came he raised the Blackfeet war song, and Red Crow and I joined in it crazily, exultingly, for the fire of battle — of men falling before us — was in our hearts.

I now came to the trail branching from ours obliquely down the valley and toward the river. I passed it, turned my horse square about, hoping thereby to force the loose animals between Red Crow and me to turn into it. They did not understand what was wanted of them, and came to a halt, and Red Crow was obliged to flounder his horse past them and ride into it, and then Heavy Robe urged them on, and as they could not pass me they were obliged to turn into the branch and follow Red Crow. All that took time, valuable time, during which both parties of the enemy were closing in upon us. Heavy Robe's gun was empty, but Red Crow and I fired our pieces, he at the lower, and I at the upper party, and we each wounded a man, how seriously we could not tell. Their comrades passed them and ran after us, firing their two guns and their arrows at long range, and

Monroe meets Sacajawea

again without effect, and we soon rode out of sight of them.

On and on we went through grove after grove of timber and through open bottoms. We were tired, we were hungry, but we dared not stop. Heavy Robe said that we must keep going until midnight, and we would then halt only long enough to cook and eat some meat. I kept my eyes upon the Seven Persons, the big dipper, and thought that they never had swung around so slowly. And then, when they pointed to a little more than midnight time, we rode into a very heavy trail in the timber, and saw on both sides of it the snow strewn with small tree-cuttings and shreds of bark, and Heavy Robe called back to us, "This is the work of the Earth House people. You shall soon see their village!"

That was good news. We went on faster in the broad, hard-beaten trail, soon emerged from the grove, and saw, away out ahead in the long, wide bottom, a dark splotch in its whiteness which Heavy Robe said was the upper village of the Pi-nap'-ut-se-na, or Lower Gros Ventres, or, as they are otherwise called, the Minnetarees. "There they are, our friends!" he said. "We shall be wel-

Bird Woman

come there — yes, more than welcome, when we tell them that we have certainly killed three Assiniboines and wounded two more, right here in their Big River Valley!”

As we neared the village we saw that it was surrounded with a stockade of tall cottonwood posts. The broad trail led us to the passageway in it, which we found had been closed for the night with an inset of heavy posts. We came to a halt before it, and Heavy Robe shouted: “Open, friends! Open the way for us!”

Three or four times he shouted that, and then we heard footsteps creaking upon hard frozen snow, and finally four or five men looked down upon us from the top of the stockade, and one of them spoke to us. Of course we could not understand his language, nor he our tongue, but when he spoke he also used the sign language, in which he asked us who we were?

“We are your friends! We are Pi-kun'-i!” Heavy Robe signed in answer, and at once the passageway was cleared for us, and as we rode in and dismounted, the men embraced us and signed to us that we were very welcome in their village.

Monroe meets Sacajawea

People were now coming to us from all parts of it, and one of them, a robe-wrapped man who thrust his face almost into mine, gave me quite a shock of surprise by saying to me in French: "You are white! Who are you, and where from?"

"I am Hugh Monroe. We come from the camp of the Pi-kun'-i Blackfeet," I answered.

"Ha! You are English! But you speak French as though you were French!" he exclaimed.

"My mother is a De la Roche," I explained.

"Ha! Yes! The De la Roches of Montreal and Three Rivers!" he exclaimed. "I know the family; that is, I saw them often in my youthful days. Myself, I am Toussaint Charboneau, one-time Nor'wester, now free man! Free! Free! But, of course, you have heard of me!"

"No, I can't say that I have," I answered.

"Is it possible! Well, then, I must tell you," he cried. "Me, I am the man who led the American soldiers, Lewis and Clark, and their men, from here to the Western Ocean and back!"

"I have heard of them," I said, "and of a Snake, named Grass Woman, who brought them to her people."

"Ha! My woman! Tsaka'-kawia, Bird Woman,

Bird Woman

as these Minnetarees named her!" he cried. "But come, M'sieu Monroe. You and your friends, you shall camp with me!"

While Charboneau and I talked together, Heavy Robe and Red Crow were telling the Minnetarees, in the sign language, about our fight with the Assiniboines; and now, as the Frenchman led us to his lodge, the whole village was aroused, and the warriors were hurrying out to saddle their horses and ride up the valley to attack the enemy. After unpacking our outfit and tethering our animals to some piles of cottonwood browse, we went inside and found ourselves in a wonderfully warm, comfortable lodge all of forty feet in diameter. Along its walls, about six feet in height, were several raised couches with buffalo leather curtains. In the center a small fire was burning, the smoke going out of a square opening in the upslanting, post-and-beam, and pole roof, heavily covered with earth, as was the insloping split-log,*faced circular wall. As we entered, a woman rose from mending the fire and turned toward us, and, thinking to give her a pleasant surprise, I said to her: "How! Bo-i'-naiv!"

Well, I did surprise her! She started back with

Monroe meets Sacajawea

a jerk, clapping a hand to her breast; then, recovering herself, addressed me in a torrent of Snake words; to which I shook my head, negatively, and then told her, in signs, that I did not understand the Snake language. I added that a chief of her people, named Black Lance, with many lodges of Snakes, was camping and hunting with our tribe, the Pi-kun'-i Blackfeet. And then Charboneau broke our conversation by very crossly ordering her — in French — to hurry and prepare food for us. Right then and there I conceived an intense dislike for him!

“You must excuse me. You called me by my right name; you mentioned my people; I did not think about the food!” she said in good French. And with tears in her eyes she turned to set several earthen pots before the fire. She was a very handsome woman of about thirty years. Not tall, rather slender, and very quick and graceful in all that she did. Her long, well-braided hair hung down over her back to her knees. She had on a gown of blue trade cloth, trimmed across the breast with several rows of elk tushes, and belted at the waist.

I now introduced my friends to Charboneau. He

Bird Woman

shook hands with them and told me to tell them that they were very welcome in his poor lodge, and then he assigned us our places in it, a couch for my almost-brother and me and another for Heavy Robe. He drew aside the curtains to them, and we were glad enough to lay aside our weapons and heavy buffalo robe wraps and sit down to rest. In a few moments the woman had warmed the food and set it before us in queer little gray earthen jars of native make. It was good food, corn boiled with meat, and we ate a lot of it. We had no sooner finished eating than we tumbled over on our couches, and almost instantly fell asleep.

Near daylight we were awakened by Charboneau, and sat up to find a tall, heavy-set, fine-appearing warrior in the lodge, no other than Red Shield, head chief of the village. He informed us that messengers had come in from the party that had gone out against the Assiniboinés and had brought bad news. It appeared that we had seen only a part of the enemy, for his men had come upon more than two hundred of them, and had been driven back with a loss of seven killed. He had sent to the lower villages for reinforcements, but knew that he could not get many, as most of the

Monroe meets Sacajawea

men were off on a buffalo hunt down the river. He asked us to go with him, with our good guns, and help fight our common enemy. Of course we could not refuse to do that, and soon after daylight we were hurrying with the party he led up the valley. At mid-forenoon we came upon the Minnetarees who had gone out from the village in the night. They were halted before a large grove, at the edge of which the trail was barricaded with a long, high pile of brush. Back of the pile the smoke from several fires was rising in the still, cold air. "There they are, the Cut-Throats," the leader of the night party told us. "There they are, safe behind their barricade, roasting meat at their fires and comfortable. And we are not strong enough to attack them. They surprised us last night and killed seven of our number!"

"Well, we cannot rush that barricade until help comes from the lower villages," Red Shield declared. And so we waited there in the terrible cold, and some time after noon the reinforcements came to us, about two hundred men from the other Minnetaree village and from the village of the Ahnah-aways, or Black Moccasins, and the two Mandan villages. The leader of the Mandans was no other

Bird Woman

than Ma-to-to'-pa, or Four Bears, Lone Walker's close friend. He gave us more than hearty greeting, and said that we must visit him as soon as possible and stop with him a long time.

We believed that the brush of the barricade concealed heavy dead timber and limbs which our horses could not break through, and, of course, the snow was so deep that we could not rush our animals past the ends of it, and so flank the enemy behind it. We simply had to make the attack on the trail, and it was certain that some, at least, of those in the lead would fall before they could penetrate the barrier. Red Shield took command of the whole party, and ordered that those who had no shield should take the rear of the line. That included Heavy Robe and Red Crow and me, but Heavy Robe declared that as he was now at the head of the line with the chiefs, he would remain with them, and so, of course, Red Crow vowed that he would stick close to his leader, and I had to declare that I would do so, too.

Red Shield looked back at the long line of us, more than two hundred riders strung out in single file in the trail, and gave the order to charge, and away we went, and simultaneously the war song of

Monroe meets Sacajawea

four different tribes was raised, the most tremendous burst of discord that I ever heard. It quite drowned out the sound of the war song of the Pi-kun'-i, which my companions and I were shouting as loudly as we could.

Back of the barrier the smoke of the enemy camp-fires still rose in the frost-filled air, but not a man could we see as we approached the wide, high brush pile across the trail. We did not doubt that two hundred Cut-Throats were watching us through its interstices, confident that they could kill so many of our lead men that the rest would turn and flee from them. Nearer and nearer we rode to the obstruction, and still we could not see even one of the enemy. I wanted, oh, so much! to see them; it is far easier, let me tell you, to approach seen danger than it is that which is hidden! There were ten men ahead of me. I saw them one by one burst through the barricade as though it were so much straw, and then with a few jumps my horse carried me through the gap they had made in the brush. I looked along the length of the barrier, and then ahead, and laughed a choking, foolish kind of laugh. We had been tricked! The Cut-Throats had cleared six large spaces of snow, and

Bird Woman

on the bared ground had built carefully constructed fires of mixed dry-and-green wood that was sure to smoulder and smoke for a day or more, and then they had gone their way! Around each fire-place was a great litter of willow cuttings and strands of rawhide rope, and two or three broken, oblong circlets of willow withes. The enemy had made snowshoes, and then gone up the beaten trail down which my companions and I had come the previous evening. Heavy frost stood like fuzz in their footprints in the snow, proving that they were hours ahead of us, but anyhow we followed, and silently enough; the various tribal war songs had come to a sudden end!

Not far above the barricade we came upon the seven Minnetarees that the Cut-Throats had killed. They were all scalped and horribly mutilated. We passed on through the grove, across a long, open bottom, through another grove, and came to the place where the enemy had put on their snowshoes and struck off due north, across the frozen river. On the opposite side a long point ran out from the plain to a small grove, and, screened by it, they had left the valley and struck out for their camp, on Mouse River, perhaps, or

Monroe meets Sacajawea

farther north, on the Assiniboine. Reluctantly, sullenly, the chase was abandoned right there, and we turned back down the trail, some of the Minnetarees dropping out to bury their dead, others to go on up the trail to take the scalps and weapons of the Cut-Throats that Heavy Robe and Red Crow and I had killed.

Well, when we returned to the village and dismounted in front of Charboneau's lodge, Sacajawea came out and told us to put our horses in a small roped-in enclosure that she had made. Defying the bitter cold she had made three or four trips to the distant timber with her *travoy* horse, and brought in loads of cottonwood browse for the animals and fuel for the lodge.

"You are very good to us. We must try to do something for you," I told her, when we had gone inside and were gathered about the fire.

"I love to do things for real people!" she exclaimed. "I would have done anything — I would have died for Red Hair and Long Knife, the great white chiefs with whom I went to the Western Ocean. Oh, that I could meet them once more, just once before I die!"

"Woman! Cease jabbering in your bad French

Bird Woman

and prepare for us a little dinner!" her man commanded, and she shrank away from him to her work.

Charboneau had been asleep on his couch when we entered. He now roused up, reached out for his pipe, and listlessly asked me what we had accomplished up-river? I answered as shortly as I could that we had been given the slip by the Assiniboines, and he laughed.

"I expected something like that would happen!" he said. "In one way or another, the Assiniboines generally get the best of these foolish villagers!"

"It is not a laughing matter to them that they have lost seven of their number!" I somewhat angrily replied.

"Ah, but they should not have gone up there in the night; they might have known they would be ambushed!" he sneered.

I had an angry reply ready for that, but just then caught Sacajawea's eyes upon me. She signed me not to argue with him, so I turned to my companions and told them what he had said. They made no comment upon it, but I knew from the expression of their faces that they disliked him as much as I did.

Monroe meets Sacajawea

"Eat! Eat heartily!" he told us, when the woman set food before us. "I am poor, but what I have I share with you so long as it lasts. Yes, I am very poor! I have only two horses, both small — almost worthless. I have no traps. I am very miserable! Now, if I had even one good horse, I could do something; I could hunt, and set deadfalls for wolves. As I am, I cannot improve my condition."

I turned to my companions: "This man," I told them, "is complaining of his poverty; he is making a talk for one of our horses. As we need him for interpreting, let us give him one."

"Give him my roan horse!" Heavy Robe grimly told me. "I would see him dead before he should have anything of mine, were it not for his woman. She is good to us: for her sake I give him the horse!"

I told Charboneau at once that we gave him our big roan, and at that he brightened up and became very talkative. Later on, when some chiefs came in to visit with us, I found that we could not use him as an interpreter, except in conjunction with his wife. Although he had been with the Minnetarees for years, he had not mastered their lan-

Bird Woman

guage! His way of interpreting was to have Sacajawea tell him in French what the Minnetarees said, and he would then change it into better French, or into English. To save time I had the woman interpret to me in French, and I turned the matter into Blackfeet.

After we had delivered our load of presents to the chiefs, with the messages of friendship from Lone Walker, they soon went their way. Charboneau went out to gamble in a near-by lodge, and left us alone with Sacajawea. That was just what I wanted. I felt that she would help me, and so I said to her: "I want to tell you what is in my heart. My chief, Terrible Tongue, Hudson's Bay Company factor at our Mountain Fort, has ordered me to try to make peace between the Cheyennes and the Blackfeet, and persuade the Cheyennes to go north with us in the spring and trade at our post. Tell me how I shall do this?"

"Be careful; don't talk so loudly," she answered, "and if my man comes in, start talking about some other matter!"

"You have been good to my poor Snake people," she went on, "and that is one reason why I want to help you. Another reason is that I want

Monroe meets Sacajawea

to help the Cheyennes; many of them are my friends. They are a brave people; a clean, hard-working people. They trap and hunt all winter long, and catch great numbers of beaver, and tan buffalo robes so soft that they fold like trade cloth. Then, in the spring, they come here and get cheated out of the result of their work. If they would only wait for the American traders, they would do well enough. But long before the trade boats come up the river, the Northwesters come from the Assiniboine with pack-trains of goods, and they pay the Cheyennes, and all who will trade with them, almost nothing for their furs. Why, they ask sixty beaver skins for a gun! Twenty skins for a blanket! And for everything else prices beyond reason. Now, your Company charges much less, does it not?"

"Only twenty skins for a gun, ten skins for a blanket, and six skins for three yards of trade cloth, enough for a woman's gown," I answered.

"Reasonable enough," she said, "and oh, how I do love peace! I would like to see peace between all tribes. I cry when I think of my Snake people, all the tribes of the plains against them, and they without guns, and so unable to defend themselves, hiding and starving for the greater part of the time

Bird Woman

in the forests of little game on the west side of the mountains.

"Now, listen! My man was once a Northwester, and he is still in league with it against all other traders, even the Americans. If he learns that you will try to bring about peace with the Cheyennes, in order to get their trade, he will do something to prevent it. You must tell no one, Minnetaree, Mandan, or Ahnahaway, that you want their trade. Just say that you would like to meet the Cheyennes, and bring about a peace between them and the Blackfeet. You remember that chief, Big Man, who was here to-night, and to whom you gave presents. He asked you to visit him. Do so, for he is really a Cheyenne, adopted by the Mandans, and so a chief in both tribes. Try to get him to go with you to the Cheyenne camp. If he will take you there, you will, at least, be sure to be well received, and get a hearing."

"I shall do as you advise," I told her; and we then talked of other things. She finally wound up the evening by telling me the story of her capture by the Minnetarees.



IV

BIRD WOMAN'S STORY OF HER CAPTURE

SO here begins Bird Woman's own story as she told it to Hugh Monroe:—

I must first tell you something about my Snake people [she began]. It is not because they are cowards that they are poor, that they hide and hunger in the mountain forests; it is because they cannot possibly hold their own against the tribes of the plains, the Blackfoot tribes especially. Always, when they went out upon the plains after buffalo, they would be driven back by enemies far outnumbering them. At last, in a summer of little rain, when few salmon ascended the rivers, and there were but few roots, the chiefs of the Snakes, the Flatheads, and the Pend'Oreilles counseled together. Said the Snake chief: "It seems to me that we have not had good sense. We have been going out upon the plains to hunt, you Flatheads in one place, you Pend'Oreilles in another, and my people in another, and that is where we have made a

Bird Woman

mistake. Let us now band together and go out to hunt buffalo; we will then number so many warriors that I doubt that the Blackfeet, or our other enemies, will even attempt to drive us from their plains. Their plains, say I? Why, they are our plains, too, and so are the herds of buffalo and antelope that cover them! Come! Let us all make plenty of arrows, and then go out and kill all that we want of our plains animals!"

The other chiefs agreed with the Snake chief to do that. They called themselves names because they had not long since banded together to hunt upon the plains. As soon as they and their warriors had made all the arrows that they could possibly need, the three tribes of them crossed the mountains and camped just above the Great Falls of the Missouri, in the midst of countless herds of buffalo. I do not know how long ago that was; it was some time before I was born.

Now the people of the three tribes were happy. They feasted upon the plenty of buffalo that the hunters killed. The women dried great quantities of it for future use, and tanned many buffalo hides for warm winter robes, and for leather for lodge skins. And day after day they kept scouts far out

Bird Woman's Story

in all directions to watch for the approach of enemies. At last, one morning, some of them were discovered, coming from the north. The scouts hurried to camp with the news, and said that the war party numbered about two hundred men, all on foot. When the chiefs of the three tribes heard that they were glad. They laughed. "We are more than six hundred men," they said. "This day we shall teach the enemy something that they will never forget! We shall kill all of them, except two or three, who shall go home and tell their people that we are now united, and so powerful that they cannot drive us from the plains!"

All the warriors of the three tribes mounted their best horses, slung their thick, bullhide shields, and with bows and arrows in hand rode out gladly to destroy the enemy war party. There they were, right out on the open plain, heading for the valley where the little river meets the big river, just above the falls. When they saw our warriors riding out to battle with them, they did not halt; they raised their war song and kept right on, and our chiefs said to one another: "They are crazy! Crazily brave! They should know — but it seems they do not — that we shall soon wipe them out!"

Bird Woman

Nearer and nearer the Snake, the Flathead, and the Pend'Oreille warriors rode to them, arrows fitted to their bows, and shields held ready to stop the flight of enemy arrows, and as they rode, their chiefs kept cautioning them not to shoot until they were so close to the enemy that they could see their eyes. But before they could ride that near, the enemy came to a halt, and some of them raised what appeared to be shining sticks, pointed them at the riders, and suddenly there burst from the ends of them fire, and smoke, and booms of thunder, and riders and horses fell as though they had been struck by lightning. Five riders and three horses went down, and all the rest of those more than six hundred riders turned and fled back to camp, and gathered in their horses and mounted their women and children and what they could of their property in their great hurry, and away they went up the trail to the mountains, once more to hide from their plains enemies and starve in the forests of the west slope. Never again, they said to one another, could they venture out after buffalo. Their plains enemies had been favored by their gods. They had been given thunder and lightning! It was useless to try to fight enemies who

Bird Woman's Story

had the weapons of the sky gods, the terrible weapons with which great trees were scattered into splinters, with which even the solid rock of the mountains was broken into small pieces!

There followed winters and summers of hunger for the three tribes. They hid deep in the forests, catching a few salmon, killing a little game, eating what roots they could find, and summer after summer the plains warmen sought them, raiding their horse herds, and killing many of the people with the thunder and lightning weapons of the sky gods. It was a hard life that those mountain tribes led. But at last it was learned that those weapons were not sky god weapons. A party of Snakes, wandering far south, met white men; men who carried these same weapons, and who said that they were not medicine; that they made them themselves, and also the black stuff like sand, and the round balls with which they fed them. They would not give nor sell the Snakes even one of them, and so, watching their chance, the war party stole one of the weapons and food for it, and hurried north to their people with it. Thereafter, knowing that these weapons were man-made, not god-made, they became less timid, and at times ventured out upon

Bird Woman

the plains after buffalo, going out generally in the late fall when war parties of the plains tribes had ceased roaming about.

Thus it was when I was born, when I was growing up, a young girl in the camp of my people. Many, oh, many times I have fled from sudden attacks upon us by the Blackfeet, the Minnetarees, and other plains enemies. We lived in constant fear of them, especially in the summer-time. From the going of the snow until it came again, the moons were moons of terror for us all.

As I grew older, deer and elk became more and more scarce in our mountain country, because of the constant hunting of them, and at last, in the spring of my tenth summer, food became so scarce that we had to cross the mountains and go down to hunt buffalo or starve to death on the west side. We were then well down on a fork of our Big River, or, as my white chiefs have named it, the Snake River. We could not wait there for the summer run of salmon to come up it; we broke camp and moved up to the west side of the pass at the head of the Missouri River. From there some of our hunters went on discovery through the pass and down the east slope, and, returning a few days

Bird Woman's Story

later, brought what meat they could pack on their riding horses. They reported that the buffalo were well below the Three Forks of the east side of Big River, too far away for our men to hunt them from where we were; so our chiefs decided that we should cross the pass and go down and camp somewhere near the Forks. It was better, they said, for us to die with full bellies than to die from starvation where we were.

We crossed the pass, followed down the trail running to the Great Falls, and camped on the West Fork of Big River, not far above its meeting-point with the Middle Fork. From there our hunters went down the valley every day, always returning before sunset with buffalo meat and hides. For the first time in many moons we had enough to eat, yes, and meat to spare, which the women dried for future use. They worked from sunrise to sunset, cutting the meat into thin sheets for drying and tanning the hides of the buffalo that the men brought in. But all of us, men, women, and children, ate and worked and played with fear in our hearts, always watching for a war party from some of the plains tribes to come in sight. We dared not sleep in our camp; as soon as the sun

Bird Woman

set and we had finished our evening meal, we scattered out, a family here, a family there, to sleep in the thick brush in the valley or up on the mountain-side. My friend, that was a terrible life we led; a life of constant fear! It is the kind of life that my Snake people still live! Oh, how my heart goes out to them! Just think, my friend, how I feel when I see the warriors of this village return from a raid with scalps that they have torn from the heads of my poor relatives!

One morning, soon after our hunters had gone down the valley to hunt more buffalo, one of them came hurrying back as fast as his horse could carry him and shouting to us that the enemy were coming. Right on his heels came others, hurrying to run in our horses from the mountain-side, and get us mounted and started off up the trail for the pass, while still others, among them my father, tried to keep the enemy back until we were well upon our way. I cannot begin to tell you the awful confusion that our camp was so suddenly thrown into! Women and children ran aimlessly about, crying, shrieking, paying no attention to the old men begging them to take courage, to wait for the horses that were being run in, and then to catch gentle

Bird Woman's Story

ones and ride off up the trail. Some of the women ran at once for the brush with their children, and others gathered their little ones and started up the trail; only a few of them heeded the old men and waited for the horses to be brought in.

I was playing with three or four girls, and we were a little way above camp when the trouble began. We ran down into the camp as fast as we could, and I called and called my mother, running first to our lodge, then to other places, but I could not find her. I tried to stop people and ask them if they had seen her, but they paid no attention to me, seemed not to hear me, and, hardly knowing what I was about, I turned and ran from camp, got into the timber and brush and made my way up the valley as fast as I could go. I soon heard the boom of guns, the shouts of the fighters, off down the valley. I ran on faster, if that was possible, tearing my way through the brush, often stumbling against a dead branch or log and falling flat. Now and then I saw women and children on one side or the other of me, and I would hurry toward them, find that my mother was not with them and go on in search of her. I was a good runner, I was strong of body, but all too soon I began to tire, to

Bird Woman

run slower and slower. Out to my right I heard people, my people, calling to one another, urging their horses on as they fled for the pass. I worked my way out to the trail, just as a last party of them were passing, and I cried out to them for help, for a horse, but they were so frightened that they never even looked toward me, and I stumbled on after them a little way, then turned back into the brush and went on.

At last the timber and brush on my side of the river gave out. Ahead was a long, open bottom, but on the opposite side of the river the growth of timber continued. I looked for a place to cross the river and got into it, but the water was very deep and swift, and I went quite a long way up the open bottom before I found a shallow ford. As I started to cross it I saw four riders coming and thought that they were my people. I stopped on the shore, intending to ask them to let me ride behind one of them. Then, all too late, I saw that they were enemy riders, and I ran into the river, stooping low, hoping that the bank would prevent them from seeing me as I crossed over into the brush. I did not look back; I had to watch my footing upon the slippery stones of the ford. I was no



AND THEN A RIDER SUDDENLY SEIZED MY LEFT ARM AND YANKED
ME UP ON HIS HORSE IN FRONT OF HIM

Bird Woman's Story

more than halfway to the brush when, above the roar of a rapid close upstream, I heard a horse splash into the water behind me, heard him make two or three jumps, heard other horses splash into the water, and then a rider suddenly seized my left arm and yanked me up on his horse in front of him. I whirled about and looked at him, and tried to bite and scratch his face, but he just laughed, and clasped me with his left arm so that I could not hurt him. He turned his horse about, and the three other riders turned too, and down the trail we went, they talking and laughing in their language so strange to me, I frightened so much that I could not cry, no, not even when we passed a boy and a girl, two of my playmates, lying dead beside the trail! On our way down to the camp we were joined by others of the enemy, some of them with captured horses, two of them with girl captives of my own age. Oh, how low-hearted we were; so sad feeling, and so afraid of our captors, that we did not even speak to one another as we were borne on down the trail!

When we arrived at camp we found there a gathering of more than a hundred of the enemy, a few of them holding a great band of Snake

Bird Woman

horses, others guarding boy and girl prisoners, the rest going about through the camp, taking whatever they found that pleased them, and setting fire to the lodges, hides, saddles, everything that would burn. We were nine prisoners, four boys and five girls, all of them of about my age. One of the girl prisoners, named Otter Woman, was my close friend. She ran to me as soon as my captor let me down from his horse, and we cried together. She told me that she had been captured by the man who had brought me in, and that he had left her with some of his companions when he went on in pursuit of our people.

While the camp was burning, our captor caught a horse for Otter Woman and one for me, and saddled them with saddles that he saved from the burning. The other prisoners were also given saddled horses, and we were all soon ordered to mount and ride. We just had to go. There were riders in front of us, riders behind us; we could not possibly escape from our captors by riding away from them. Down the trail we went, passing here and there one and another of our people, dead and scalped. And as we passed each one the boys and girls cried afresh; all but Otter Woman and I. We

Bird Woman's Story

felt as badly as the others, worse, perhaps, but somehow we could not cry.

On and on we went down the valley, and at sunset made camp beside the river. We prisoners were ordered to build a little fire for ourselves and were given plenty of fat buffalo meat to roast. We did cook it, but felt so sad that we could no more than taste it. All around us the war party were gathered about little fires, talking, laughing, roasting meat. There was a full moon; the night was so bright that we could see the great band of horses out on the flat, four or five men constantly riding around them and keeping them together while they grazed. We were very miserable. We mourned for our relatives, dead, perhaps, and we trembled as we thought of what might be in store for us,—death, most likely!

After a time the man who had captured Otter Woman and me came and sat near us, and said to us in signs: "You two are mine. I shall take you to my big lodge, and there you will have plenty to eat, good clothing, and you will help my women in their work, and you will be the same to me as my own children. So do not be afraid of me. But do not try to escape; if you do, I shall have to kill

Bird Woman

you, for I cannot be bothered by chasing you and bringing you back."

We made no answer to that; so, looking straight at us, he went on: "How is it? Do you understand?" And we then signed back to him that we did. He was a man of about fifty years was our captor, and he had a kind face and a soft, laughing voice, but, oh, how Otter Woman and I feared him that first evening! He signed to us all to lie down and go to sleep, and we all did lie down around our little fire, Otter Woman and I closely side by side, and then he made signs, "That is good!" and moved away from us. We did not intend, any of us, to sleep. We watched the circle of our captors, hoping to escape from them when they lay down and fell asleep. But before they did that they left three men on guard and these came and sat near us. At midnight three others took the watch and they lay down. And at that, afraid though we were, we, too, slept. We were so tired that we could not keep awake.

We were awakened at daylight, taken to the river to wash ourselves, brought back and given more meat, and told to hurry cooking and eating it. We were now so hungry, and so much

Bird Woman's Story

less frightened, that we did eat. After that the horses were brought in, and we were soon all mounted and on our way again down the valley. We rode steadily until noon, and again, after a short rest, until night. During the long day we had become somewhat used to our captivity, and less and less afraid that our captors were going to do worse than make slaves of us. But we did not intend to be slaves; we sat around our little fire that evening and made all kinds of plans to escape and return to the mountains and find our people, hiding, we were sure, somewhere in the forests of the west side. But as fast as we made our plans we saw that they were not good. How could we escape when, all through the night, there was a guard over us? We could not do it! Again we became very low-hearted; we cried; and crying, fell asleep.

V

THE ESCAPE OF HER COMPANIONS

ON the fourth evening of our capture we camped just above the falls of the river. That was as far as we had ever come out upon the plains with our people. On the following day we traveled until evening along a trail running across a high, waterless plain, and then again struck the river and made camp. Then for two days we crossed a great plain, and in the evening of the second day made camp at the west end of some mountains, the Bearpaw Mountains of your Blackfeet country, as I afterward learned. Used as we were to a mountain country, the plains terrified us. We had not thought that they were of so great extent. As far as we could see to the north and the east, they ran to the very edge of the world without a break, and to the southeast, past a point of low mountains, they were also without end. If we did in some way escape from our captors we saw that, without horses or the means of carrying water, we should die from thirst before we could ever recross them.

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On that night, at the point of the mountains, our captors for the first time left no guard over the camp when they lay down to sleep, and the horse herd, with its guard of three or four men, was out of sight from us behind a ridge. As soon as we were sure that we were to have no guard we began to whisper to one another that as soon as it was safe to do so, we should one by one crawl out from camp into the dark pine forest near by and then run for our lives.

"But where shall we run?" one of the boys asked us. "We do not want to go east, we cannot go west across the waterless plain. I say that this is not the time for us to try to escape; we must wait. And, anyhow, seeing that we were quiet enough this night, our captors will cease watching us, and so, when the right time comes, we shall surely get away from them."

We all agreed that the boy was right, and soon went to sleep.

On the following morning, leaving the little mountain range on our right, we soon came to a small stream running east in a wide, low valley in the plain. We were sure that it came from our great mountains; it was the stream that, later on,

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my white chiefs named Milk River. We said to one another that, if we could escape from our captors now, we could follow it up to our mountains, and then turn south along them to the Big River, — the Missouri, — and then through the pass at the head of it to our people. As we rode along in the midst of our captors we agreed to try to escape from them that night.

On that day the great number of game herds that we saw astonished us. The wide valley and the great plain through which it ran were grass-hidden by buffalo and antelope, and in every grove of timber were herds of elk and both kinds of deer. Late in the afternoon, as we passed a point of timber, we came upon a big bear that was going into it with an antelope fawn hanging from its mouth. As soon as it saw us it dropped the fawn, sat up and looked at us, and then, with loud roars, came charging straight at us. Think of it! A bear charging more than a hundred riders, driving several hundred horses! It had no fear of the thunder of the horses' feet; no fear of the odor of many men that the west wind carried to it. With long, swift leaps it came straight at us, and we all, captors and prisoners, scattered out before it

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and rode for our lives, and, fast as we rode, it almost overtook one of us, a girl who was on a small, slow horse. It followed us a long way before it gave up the chase, and then, when it did stop, our captors did not turn back to attack it. They rounded up the scattered herd of horses and we went on.

That evening, when we made camp by the river, and just below a large grove, our captors for the first time ordered us to gather wood for the cooking-fires. We were afraid to go into the timber; we thought that there might be in it another of the great bears of this plains country, bears much larger than we had ever seen in our mountains, and in signs we told our captors that we were afraid. At that one of them turned upon us so fiercely that we just ran for the timber, more afraid of him than we were of bears. After all, we said to one another, there might not be a bear in that grove. We went into the grove; a step or two at a time; farther and farther in; so far at last that we were out of sight of our captors.

"Come! Let us run! Let us go up this grove and hide in the thick willows, and when night falls, start up this valley for our mountains!" one of the boys proposed.

Bird Woman

"We should never reach our mountains; the big bears would kill us all!" said a girl, and all the other girls agreed with her that that was true enough.

Said a boy, "I have been thinking hard; this is how it is with us: were we to escape from our captors, and from the bears along the way, still we should never reach our mountains; for without a bow and arrows to kill meat for us, we should starve to death on the long trail."

And what he said was true enough. It was true, too, as others said, that there were no roots in this country; that the berries were not ripe; that we had seen only a very few very small fish in the little river.

Then said the first boy — he was older and more wise than any of us: "Let us hurry and gather a lot of wood for the fires. Although our hearts are very low, let us talk and laugh around our fire. So shall we make our captors think that we no longer want to escape from them. They will cease watching us. There will come a time when we can steal bow and arrows from them; a gun, even; and then we shall do the best we can to travel back to our people."

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As our leader proposed, that we did. We surprised our captors by our talk and laughter that evening; we could see them watching us; talking about us; agreeing that we were forgetting our people and the wrong that they had done to them and to us.

Day after day we rode on and on down that valley, once cutting a big bend in it, and on the evening of the fifth day from the time that we struck it, camped at its junction with a very wide river of dirty water that we knew was no other than the Big River we had left not far out from our mountains. And here its valley was quite wide, and its groves of cottonwoods and willows of great length and breadth. Could we escape from our captors into one of them, we believed that they would never find us.

On this evening we did not wait to be told to gather firewood. We began bringing it in from a great heap of dry drift that was lodged on a sandbar just below the mouth of the little river. There were several logs in it that could easily be rolled into the stream, and we noticed that the boy who had become our leader — his name was Elk Horn — looked at them a long time, and let us make a

Bird Woman

trip to camp with wood while he walked around them and upon them, and, standing at one end and then another, pushed against them with the back of his legs. We were providing wood for six fires every evening. On this evening he told us to make our fire at the edge of the circle nearest the river, unless we were ordered not to do so. We did make it there, and were not told to move it to the center of the circle. None of our captors paid any attention to us, other than to lay beside our place plenty of meat of a fat cow that they had killed while we were making camp.

After we had cooked and eaten all the meat that we wanted, Elk Horn said to us: "Now I am going to tell you something. While I am telling it, little by little, do not all look at me. Look at one another, saying a few words, and do some laughing. Now I begin: If I can steal a bow and arrows or a gun, after our captors fall asleep, we shall try to escape from them."

He stopped there, and we talked and laughed about nothing, but it was hard to do because we were so anxious to hear what more he had to say.

"At the edge of the drift pile by the river are two dry logs that we can roll into the water," he

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went on. "If I can get a bow and arrows or a gun, without awaking any one, we shall then, one by one, crawl away from here and down the bank of the river to the drift. When we are all there we shall roll the logs in so that they will float, and then half of us clinging to one and half to the other, we shall push out and swim to the other shore. Of course we shall drift downstream a long way in doing that —" There he paused while we talked and laughed again, and then went on: "But once we get into the timber on the other side we shall be safe; our captors will hunt a long time for us up this side of the river and never think that we crossed it. In the shelter of the timber over there we can go on and on up the valley, traveling in the daytime and killing what meat we need, and so, if the bears do not get any of us, we shall all be again with our people by the end of another moon; maybe before that; it may not be as far to our mountains as we think. There! I have said it. Be sure, all of you, to keep awake and watch me, and one by one follow me to the drift if I leave the circle!"

We all thought Elk Horn's plan a good one. One by one we told him that we should do as he said. Oh, how fast our hearts beat! Mine did, anyhow,

Bird Woman

as we watched our captors, hoping that they would soon lie down and sleep and sleep soundly. Some of them did so soon after their evening meal, but others sat up, smoking and talking, as long as there was any wood to burn. We all lay down soon after Elk Horn had told us his plan for escape, our little fire went out, and we watched our captors, pretending that we were asleep. Would you believe it — my close friend, Otter Woman, lying by my side, almost at once went to sleep! I nudged her, pinched her, whispered to her that she must keep awake. She promised that she would and went right to sleep again! And I soon knew, from the way they breathed, that all the others, except Elk Horn, were asleep! He was on the opposite side of the fireplace from me, lying on his stomach, his head to the enemy. I could see him now and then slowly raise his head and look at them. I felt sure that he would not sleep.

Two men remained up, talking and smoking, long after all the others were asleep. Three or four times their little fire went down to nothing but a few red coals, and they would liven it with handfuls of dry twigs. As I watched these men I found that I was getting sleepy; two or three times I

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caught myself falling asleep; it was only by the greatest effort that I made myself break out of a doze and open my eyes. After the two men could find no more twigs and had lain down by their dying fire, I found it still more difficult to keep awake, and toward the last of my watch I cast off my robe, exposing myself to the cold night air, and even bit my wrists now and then. So doing, I did keep awake, and was the only one of us to see Elk Horn when he began to wriggle like a snake toward the nearest sleeping group of our captors. In the bright moonlight I could see him quite plainly. He went so slowly that he did not seem to move at all, and, as he neared the sleeping men, he often as slowly raised up and looked at them for a long time. Watching him, I was becoming more and more excited; all feeling of sleep left me; my whole body began to tremble with eagerness for his success. When he had crawled quite near the sleepers, I sat up so that I could see plainly all that he did. Oh, how my heart went down as I saw him, after crawling close to the nearest of the sleepers, begin to back away. I thought that he was giving up; was coming back to us; that there would be no escape for us!

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But no! He back-crawled only to start again, circling around to the right of the circle of sleepers. Having done that, he crawled straight to the outer one of them, more slowly than ever, paused by his side, and then as slowly began backing away from him, and, finally turning, came toward us. I almost cried out loud, "He has seized it!" when I saw that he was shuffling along with him something that he gripped with his right hand, and as he neared us I made out that it was a bow and arrow case!

It was now time for me to awaken our sleepers, and, right at the start, I made a great mistake: I should have begun with my best friend, Otter Woman, lying at my side. Instead of that I awakened the girl nearest me on my right, then one by one the girls beyond her, and from them I passed around to the boys and one by one aroused them. I did this very carefully, putting my hand upon the mouth of each one, and whispering, "Awake! It is time to go!" And as I awakened them, girls and boys, they would one by one sit up, see Elk Horn coming, and then begin crawling toward the bank of the river.

I now came around back to Otter Woman, put

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my hand over her mouth and whispered to her to awake. She never moved. I shook her gently, whispering again and again, but all that she would do was to breathe more heavily. I dared not pinch her, nor do anything else that would make her wake suddenly and cry out. I continued to hold my hand upon her mouth and move her head this way and that, and whisper, "Awake! Come, we must go!" And all that time our companions were going. I looked around and saw that they had all of them, excepting one other girl, the first that I had awakened, gone out of sight down the slope of the river-bank. This other girl had gone to sleep again right after I had awakened her! Oh, how angry I was at these two girls! I was minded to leave them! I did start to do so, but my love for Otter Woman drew me back to her. Again I rolled her head and whispered to her; time and again I did that, and still without effect. So, finally, after a look at the sleeping men, I stood up, took hold of her two hands, and began to pull her to her feet; and at that she suddenly awoke, shrieking as loudly as she could, "No, No! Don't kill me!"

Ha! As one man, our captors awoke and sprang to their feet, looking around and calling to one

Bird Woman

another, and then came rushing to us, some of them seizing Otter Woman and me, and the other girl, Leaping Fish Woman, while others ran in all directions seeking the missing. Scared as I was, I noticed that none of them went farther than the edge of the slope of the bank, and the two or three who ran to it turned and also ran for the timber above us, after hurriedly looking down the slope and out at the drift pile on the sandbar. We were soon left with but one man guarding us, the man who had captured Otter Woman and me at the Three Forks of the Big River—the man who owned us. All of the others had gone off into the timber along the little river, and some across it, into the big grove of cottonwoods running up the main river. This man was not at all angry at us for attempting to escape, and he did not seem to care if our companions were recaptured or went free. He just laughed at us, and signed to us to go with him into the timber and gather some wood, and that we should then build a fire and roast and eat some meat.

Of course we were wondering what had become of our companions. We did not believe that they had had time to get the logs into the water and

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push out into the stream before our captors were aroused by Otter Woman's shrieks. We were quite sure that they had hidden in the drift pile, or behind it, when the shrieking and shouting began. And now, as we went with the man toward the timber, I heard, surely heard, a splash in the water behind us. We all heard it, and we three looked at one another and at our captor, but he paid no attention to it. I afterward saw that it was a sound natural enough to him, a dweller on this Big River; its banks and sandbars are being continually cut and swept away by its current. It was not until I returned to my people with my white chiefs that I learned that the splash that we heard really was the splash of a log from the drift pile. Those boys and girls had hidden behind the pile, and then, when all became still, they got one log into the stream and, drifting far down with it, reached the other shore. From there, after almost two moons of travel, they entered our west side country and found our people. Elk Horn had no trouble in killing what meat they wanted, and in making fire with a bow drill, with the bow and arrows that he had taken from the sleeping enemy, nor, on that long trail, did those boys and girls see any ene-

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mies; they did have two narrow escapes from the great bears of the Big River Valley.

We were three sad-hearted girls that sat by the little fire we built for our captor. He offered us meat, but we refused it; even the sight of it, in our despair, sickened us. As he ate his meat our captor often broke out laughing, and finally signed to us: "My friends up there in the timber are like birds, running in all directions in search of their little ones. Myself, I have my little ones; here you are right with me. I wish that you could see your faces: so sad, so old-looking, as if you were very, very old and about to die! No, my little ones, you are not to die; you will soon be living in a good lodge; eating plenty of food; wearing good gowns. Yes, you will soon be happy enough. Come, now, wipe away your tears and laugh!"

Otter Woman and I just sat and stared at him. But the other girl was different; even then, young as she was, she would get quickly, fearlessly angry. In answer to the man she suddenly darted her head forward like a snake, and spit at him! And at that the man laughed all the harder and signed to her: "Now, that is what I like to see, a brave heart! Women of brave heart make good wives.

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I shall buy you from your captor, and when you grow up you shall be my wife!"

In answer to that, Leaping Fish Woman again spit at him, and signed, too, "I hate you!"

VI

CHARBONEAU WINS A WIFE BY GAMBLING

AFTER a long time the men came straggling back from their search for our companions. A few of them caught up horses and saddled them, and rode away to look again for the missing ones. The rest, tired enough, lay down to sleep again. Our captor made Otter Woman and me lie down close to him, and Leaping Fish Woman's captor signed her to lie beside us. We could not sleep, so great was our sorrow that we had not got away with our companions. When morning came, and we were again on the trail down the valley, we were so tired that it was all we could do to sit upon our horses.

Day after day we continued on down that valley of the Big River, through great groves of cottonwoods and across wide, long, grassy bottoms that were just covered with buffalo and antelope and deer and elk, and so tame that they would do no more than get out of the trail ahead of us. Each evening our captors killed a number of fat buffalo

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cows, and took only the choice parts of them, leaving great quantities of meat to the wolves. We had never seen waste like that, and we expected the gods in some way to punish them for it. Our Snake people took every part of the animals they killed, and were glad enough to eat even the toughest of the meat.

On and on we traveled, and one day arrived at the village — this village — of our captors. How we three girls did stare at it: the great, sloping, earth-roofed, round lodges, all enclosed with a fence of cottonwood logs set upright in the ground. And how the people stared at us, and we at them, at the women and girls especially, some of them wearing gowns of strange, soft, red or blue material that we were soon to know was trade cloth. Our captors entered the village singing their war song, waving the scalps that they had taken, and were loudly greeted and praised by their people. The man who had captured Otter Woman and me led us into his lodge, and we were surprised at the great size of it and the comfort of it. There the coldest weather of winter could never be felt; and what soft beds of buffalo robes there were, built all along the wall and curtained with brightly painted

Bird Woman

leather. Two women, the wives of our captor, and their children, came into the lodge with us, and our captor signed to us that we were to mind them, to do all that they told us to do. One of the women, the head wife, gave us one of the couches and motioned us to sit upon it. We did so, and she soon gave us large earthen dishes full of food that she took from pots set around the little fire. It was very strange food, corn boiled with meat, and it tasted so good that we ate it all.

So life began for us in this village of the Minnetarees, as you call these people. That is not the right name for them; in their language they call themselves Hidasta.

We got our greatest surprise of all that first evening when three white men came into the lodge to visit our captor. They were, we learned in time, traders from a post of the Nor'west Company, somewhere north on the Assiniboine River. Two of them were young men, smooth-faced and blue-eyed, and their hair was sun-colored. We thought them the most handsome men that we had ever seen. The other man, much older than they, had dark hair growing long upon his cheeks and under his nose, and that made his appearance so horrible,

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so sickening, that, after one quick look at him, we could not look again. Somehow we were not afraid of the two young men; we liked to look at them; at their white skins tinged, on their cheeks, with faint red; and we could not help but admire their strangely fashioned clothes. They asked us many questions in the sign language, about our people and our country, and we answered them all as well as we could.

On the very next day our captor's women — his name was Red Arrow — set us to work tanning buffalo leather. Later on we were taught to do many kinds of work. What we liked most to do was to work in their field of corn and other plants; it was pleasant to see them grow and flower, and the flowers turn into fruit that was so good to eat. And we soon had a helper in our work, for, as he had signed us that he would do, Red Arrow bought Leaping Fish Woman from her captor, paying him four horses and a gun. It was his great pleasure to tease her every evening, and, sad-hearted as we were, Otter Woman and I could not help but laugh with the rest at the way she would suddenly anger at him, spit at him, and say to him in the sign language all the mean, taunting things that she could think of.

Bird Woman

Well, at first we three were always talking about escaping from these people, but as time passed Otter Woman and I became less and less eager for it, as we thought of the great dangers that we should risk upon the long trail to our country. Leaping Fish Woman was different; more brave than we were; she never ceased planning to escape, and often told us that, if we would not make the attempt with her, she would go alone. We did not believe that she meant it.

The summer passed, and the long winter, and by the time spring came, we had all three learned to talk in the language of our captors. As soon as the new grass began to grow, Leaping Fish Woman talked more and more about going back to our people, and at last, one evening, she told us that if we would not go with her, she would try to escape all by herself that very night. Fear of the long trail, the terrible bears along it, and men, too, Blackfeet men, was something that we could not get over, and we said so, and still believed that she would not go without us. When we awoke the next morning she had gone! All the men of the village turned out to help Red Arrow search for her, but they found not even a footprint of her in the trails. We two missed

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her terribly for a long time! Then twice that summer war parties returned to the village with Snake scalps and Snake horses that they had taken in raids across the mountains, and their rejoicings over their deeds also hurt us; we were unhappy enough!

With the coming of winter, a white man who was married to a Minnetaree woman, and who lived in the village below, moved up to this village and bought a lodge in it. He had been a Nor'wester, but was now free, a free man. He trapped and hunted a little part of the time, and did some trading with the Cheyennes and other tribes that now and then came to visit the Minnetarees and the Mandans. This man — I may as well tell you now that it was Charboneau — was often a visitor in our — in Red Arrow's lodge. With other men he came there to gamble, to play hide-the-bone for horses, guns, knives, and all kinds of small property. Often, very often, we would awake in the morning and find the men still playing the game. There would sometimes be men from the lower Minnetaree village and from the Mandan villages gambling with them.

The white man, Charboneau, could not under-

Bird Woman

stand the language of this tribe, although he had long had a Minnetaree wife, and so he conversed with the people in the sign language. Well, when we awoke one morning a number of men were still gambling in the lodge, among them the white man, who was playing against our captor, Red Arrow. The players were ranged in two rows, one on each side of the fire, and a man on one side of it played against the man directly opposite him. When Otter Woman and I awoke and sat up, a game had just been concluded, and the players began making bets for a fresh game. We noticed that the white man was smiling, and Red Arrow appeared to be very low-hearted as they arranged their bets, so we knew that Red Arrow was a heavy loser in the games of the night. The two began arguing about the bet to be made for the fresh game, and at first Otter Woman and I, no more than half awake and sleepy-eyed, paid little attention to them. Then I saw the white man sign to our captor: "You say that you have nothing left to bet. You have several things; plenty to bet. Your spotted buffalo runner is a good horse, my black runner is faster than he. I will bet my black against your spotted horse!"

Red Arrow considered the offer for a long time.

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"No, I dare not bet that horse," he answered. "That horse is my meat-getter; if I should lose him, my women and my children would go hungry!"

"But you may win!" the white man argued. "You have been losing all night, so it is now time for you to begin winning. I really think that you will win this bet!"

Again Red Arrow thought and thought, rubbing his hands hard together; his forehead wrinkling deeply as he stared at the fire—stared at it and yet did not see it. I have never seen any one frown so hard as he did. And then he suddenly straightened up and cried out as he made the signs: "No! No! I will not risk my children's food in this hide-the-bone game!"

The white man laughed: "I will let you have the chance to get still more meat for your children," he signed. "I will bet my fast buffalo horse against your two Snake captives!"

"Yes!" Red Arrow signed.

"No! No!" I screamed, and so did Otter Woman. I had by this time well learned the Minnetaree language. "Oh, Red Arrow! Oh, great chief! Good chief! Do not gamble us off! We will work for you,

Bird Woman

oh, so hard!" I pleaded. But he would not even look at us. He held the two bones, the little white one and the black one. He looked down along the line of the men in his row and asked them if they were ready? They were; they had all made their bets. He began juggling the bones as the gambling song was raised. He shifted them from one hand to the other in front of him; shifted them behind his back. Time and again he did this, nodding his head and bowing his back in time to the song, and at last held his two closed hands up in front of his shoulders and the singing suddenly ceased. The white man looked long at the two hands, stared long at Red Arrow right in his eyes, stared again at the hands, and then slapped his right hand into the palm of the other as he pointed to Red Arrow's left hand. And as suddenly Red Arrow sank down in his seat and, opening that hand, showed the black bone, and Otter Woman and I began to cry. The white man had won us from the man who, though our captor, had ever been as kind to us as though we were his own children!

Red Arrow's women cried out at him, calling him names, for they had learned to love us. Red Arrow himself sat like one who had suddenly lost his

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mind. Then he straightened up and cried and signed to the white men: "I will now bet my spotted fast runner. I will bet him against the two girls!"

The white man shook his head. "No," he signed back, "I have won them, and I shall keep them!"

"I will bet all my fourteen horses against them!" Red Arrow offered.

"No! I have won them; I shall keep them!" he again answered. And then, turning to Otter Woman and me, he signed us to take up our belongings and go with him to his lodge. There was nothing for us to do but obey. As we followed him out of the lodge, crying harder than ever, we left Red Arrow sitting with bowed head and all humped over, his women furiously scolding him for having wagered and lost us!

Ah, well! Youth, my friend, quickly accustoms itself to whatever is to be; it was not long before Otter Woman and I dried our tears. The Minnetaree wife of the white man was very gentle-hearted, very kind to us, and we soon learned to love her. She was not strong, so we undertook to do her work. It was not long before we were doing all of it, the lodge work, the garden work, the tanning of skins, and the bringing in of wood and

Bird Woman

water. We talked less and less about trying to escape to our people, and, after a winter or two had passed, we never mentioned it except when a war party returned to the village with Snake scalps and Snake horses. Excepting at such times we were contented, yes, quite happy. The white man, of winters enough to have been our father, was sometimes cross, but generally good to us; his anger went as quickly as it came. And so, working hard and playing not at all, the winters and summers passed, during which we grew up to be young women.

There came a time when I felt so badly that I could not talk about it. I cried and cried, and was near jumping into the river to end it all! It was a disappointment; a blow at the heart, my friend! A young Mandan, named White Grass, who often visited in the Minnetaree village, looked at me, and I at him, for he was good to look at; so slim and tall, fine of face, and long-haired. And from looking at one another, we came, in time, to saying a few words as we met and passed. At last, one day when Otter Woman and I were tending our garden of growing corn, he came and told me that he loved me, and I — I was not ashamed — I told

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him that I had long been hoping that he would say that to me. We sat down right there at the edge of the corn, and, while Otter Woman worked, he told me what we should do. We should have a lodge of our own in the village of his people. They would build it for us; furnish it. We should have a garden of our own and raise plenty of good food, and he would hunt and bring in plenty of meat, and we should be very comfortable and happy. To all that he said I answered, yes, that would be the way of it. And then Otter Woman, listening to our happy talk, said to me: "Don't be crazy! Don't be making plans until you know what our white man owner will say to this!"

"He will say yes, of course! I will give him ten horses for you! He cannot refuse to take ten horses, ten good, big horses!" my young sweetheart cried.

And then I laughed happily, and said that he would never refuse to take that many for me, more, far more than I was worth.

But Otter Woman shook her head: "No," she said, "best that you end your dream right now, right here; he will not sell you for twenty — no, not for all the Mandan horses!"

Bird Woman

White Grass sprang to his feet, pulled me up beside him, and said to Otter Woman: "I will prove to you that you are wrong; we will go to the white man right now and I shall give him the horses!"

Away we went across the flat and into the village. We paused at the entrance to the lodge and looked at one another, for the first time afraid that all might not come out as we wanted it. Then White Grass shrugged his shoulders and straightened up and led the way, and, oh, how handsome he was, how fearless, as he stopped before the fireplace and said to the white man, sitting on his couch beyond it: "White man! Great chief! This girl, your slave, I love and she loves me. Ten horses, ten good, big horses I give you for her!"

The white man would not have understood what White Grass said to him had he not accompanied his talk with the sign language. As it was, he was slow to understand, and the youth had to repeat it. Then he did understand; he sprang to his feet and raged at the youth, who could not understand a word of his French speech: "Dog Mandan," he howled, "go away from here! Go! Go! Go! Never enter this lodge again! Outside in the village, in the

Charboneau wins a Wife

gardens, the timber, wherever you see this Snake girl, go away around and never speak to her. Hurry! Get out of here!"

White Grass made no answer to that; he just stared at the still shouting, arms-waving white man, and slowly turned to go. As he passed he said to me: "Take courage, sweetheart. I go, but I shall return. I go to make a name for myself, to take horses, and still more horses from the enemy, and scalps, too, and when I come again he will not dare refuse to give you to me!"

I, too, turned to go, go back to the corn and ask my almost-sister to comfort me. Nearly blinded with my tears, I was feeling my way along when the white man thundered to me to stop, and then told his Minnetaree woman to go with me to the corn, to watch me and see that the young Mandan never came near. The poor, sick woman did as she was told, and thereafter, wherever Otter Woman and I went, she was obliged to go with us. But her heart was not with her white man; it was with us. The very next day, when we were in the corn, she watched the not distant village and all who came from it, while White Grass circled in from the hills and had a last talk with me. It was all very straight:

Bird Woman

Otter Woman sat by my side while he told me again and again how much he loved me, and I promised him that, no matter how long I should have to wait, I would be his woman. He would leave the next day, he said, with a party going to war against the Pawnees, and would, no doubt, take plenty of horses from them. That would be the beginning of his work to get together so many horses that the white man could not refuse to trade me for them. He then kissed me four times, the sacred number, and mounted his horse and rode away down the flat.

My friend, that was the last that I ever saw of my Mandan sweetheart. He had not been gone a moon before word came to us from the Mandan village that, on their way to the Pawnee country, the war party which he accompanied had been ambushed by the Arickarees, and all but two had been killed. The two survivors told that my sweetheart had fought bravely to the very last, and had killed a great warrior of the Arickarees, a chief named Turtle, before he fell. The white man laughed when this news came to us in our lodge, laughed long and loud and looked at me. And I — although I felt that my heart was going out

Charboneau wins a Wife

from me — I would not let even one tear fall before him, nor in any way show that this sad news was anything to me. Yes, I kept my face calm, and told my almost-sister to talk with me; to say anything, no matter what, to keep us talking. She understood; she started the talk by asking me if I thought that the buffalo would become well furred early in the coming winter!

But, oh, how I cried and mourned for my lost sweetheart when off in the corn, or the timber, away from the white man!

Working hard, Otter Woman and I harvested the corn and other garden growths, and stored them away when dry, and then we brought in load after load of firewood for winter use. And although my Mandan sweetheart was gone, the white man still had his Minnetaree woman go with us wherever we went. Day by day, moon by moon, the woman became more thin, more weak, and with the first snow of winter she took to her couch, and soon died. The white man did not seem to care; he ordered us to help her relatives put up a scaffold out on the flat and lash her robe-bound body upon it. When we had done that and had returned to the lodge, he said to me: "Now that the old

Bird Woman

woman is gone, you two shall be my wives. You shall be my head wife; your place is here beside me on this couch, and your friend, there, shall have that couch. As you are the head wife, I look to you to keep this lodge in good shape. Yours will be the blame if there is not always garden food in the pot, plenty of wood on hand. And what time you are not otherwise busy, you will tan the hides I bring in. If you are not a fool, you will make your friend work as hard as you do, and even harder. Now, do you understand all that I have said?"

For moons back I had seen this coming, dreading it terribly, and now that it had come I was so scared of him that I could not answer, not even to nod my head. I was more scared than when I had been seized in the river by the Minnetaree warrior; and this time I was scared to such weakness that I felt I had not the power to move even a finger. Otter Woman was scared too; she was crying. The white man went silent. I could hear him breathing hard, as he did when angry, but I could not look at him; I remained as I was, all bowed over on my couch and, oh, so sick at heart! Then, soon, I heard him spring from his couch; he seized me

Charboneau wins a Wife

and lifted me and threw me over upon his couch, crying out: "I'll teach you to mind me! Now stay there, right there where you belong!" My friend, that was a night of terror! So it was that I became the head wife of Charboneau!

Thus far, my son, had Sacajawea got in the story of her adventures, when her man came in and ended it for the time. And he came in cross, cursing his luck, for he had lost the good horse we had given him. But that was nothing, no, nothing to what occurred the following day. It was about noon when Sacajawea's son, a fine, sturdy boy of eleven or twelve years, returned from a visit with young Mandan friends in their village. His mother introduced him to us, and he gave me greeting in French, which he spoke with but little trace of Indian accent. Soon after he entered, his father came in and asked whose horse was that tied near the lodge entrance.

"It is mine!" the boy answered proudly. "It is a gift from my close friend, Big Cottonwood."

"Ha! Is that so!" Charboneau exclaimed, rubbing his hands and smiling happily. "Well, my son, you shall loan him to me for a time. Last

Bird Woman

night I lost a good horse in the hide-the-button game, so I will now stake your horse against him and win him back."

And with that out he went, and the boy burst into tears: "Three horses have I had," he wailed, "and he has gambled them off. And now he takes this one from me and will lose it. I shall never, never have a horse to keep for my very own!"

Poor lad! I felt sorry for him. My disgust at this Charboneau grew, and my companions despised him as much as I did. And, sure enough, the man did lose the horse. He came in soon after night-fall, said not a word to me, ordered his woman to set food before him, and after eating, smoked in silence until bedtime. Truly, that was an unhappy lodge. It depressed my companions and me, and, now that he had nothing more to gamble off, Charboneau remained with us the most of the time, moaning over his losses and hinting that he could recover them if we would only give him something for an entering stake in the game. We did not take the hints. Three or four times, at my request, Sacajawea began telling me of her adventures with Lewis and Clark, but always Charboneau took the story away from her, and told

Charboneau wins a Wife

what he did; how, but for him, the expedition would never even have reached the Falls of the Missouri; so I never did get her story of it all. Your almost-mother, here, Earth Woman, and Crow Woman, too, know it well, so let them tell it to you.

Did Sacajawea love Charboneau? you ask. I don't know about the love. She mothered him; was patient with him; endured his bursts of anger; and was, no doubt, faithful to him to the end. For the sake of her son, whom she dearly loved, she was sure to be good to the father. She was surely good to us wanderers from the camp of the Pikun'-i, and greatly interested in my endeavor to bring about a peace treaty between them and the Cheyennes. Yes, and it was through her own suggestion that I worked upon Heavy Robe's interest in medicines, and so I got him to become strongly in favor of a treaty of peace with the Cheyennes, in order that he might see their wonderful medicines, the Sacred Arrows and the Buffalo Hat. Accompanied by the Cheyenne-Mandan chief, Big Man, we visited the Cheyenne camp on the Little Missouri, and made plans with their chiefs for a great peace meeting between them and the

Bird Woman

Pi-kun'-i, and that took place early in the following spring. It was about the grandest ceremony I ever witnessed. But all that is another story, my son. Some day you shall write the story of my life, and in that will be all about our meeting the Cheyennes, and how, afterward, they went north with us to trade with Terrible Tongue.¹

After leaving the Minnetaree and Mandan villages for the Cheyenne camp, I never saw Sacajawea again. But years afterward, at Jim Bridger's place on Green River, I did meet her son, Baptiste, who had grown to be a fine, upstanding man. He spoke English, as well as French, and was Bridger's Snake interpreter. He well remembered my visit in the lodge of his father and mother in the Minnetaree village as soon as I brought to his mind the incident of his father losing his Mandan gift-horse in the hide-the-button game. He told me that his father was dead, and that his mother was then living with her own Snake people. I never met Baptiste again, and never heard anything more about his mother.

¹ I have written Hugh Monroe's story of his first two years on the great plains, and it will be published in due time. (J.W.S.)

VII

EARTH WOMAN BEGINS HER STORY

THIS is the story of Bird Woman as I heard it from Mrs. James Kipp, Earth Woman:—

We Mandans called her by her Minnetaree name, Tsaka'kawia, for we all well understood and spoke the language of that tribe. But we had other names for her: The Gentle Woman, and Led-the-First-Big-Knives Woman. My great chief father was very fond of her, and often got her to make long visits in our lodge and tell us about the far countries and the different peoples that she had seen in her travels. She was the only woman I ever knew who had a place in the chiefs' circle; more often than not, she sat at my father's right hand, upon his couch at the back of the lodge, and the gathering of chiefs and medicine men, and we women and children, grouped near the entrance, all listened to her wonderful tales with the closest attention.

I was born the summer before the great white

Bird Woman

chiefs, Long Knife and Red Hair, arrived at our village with their men, so, of course, I cannot remember having seen them. But as I grew up I heard over and over the story of their coming, which, up to that time, was the greatest event that had ever happened in our villages. Another great event was to happen in later time, the coming of the first steamboat, and that I saw, and well remember how my people fled in terror from it. But I did not flee with them; I was married, and, although I, too, was terribly frightened at the loud roaring it made, I stood by my man's side, my hand in his, and braved the noise of it.

When Long Knife and Red Hair arrived in our country we had become used to white men. First, many winters before, there had come to us a few white men from the north, men who wore iron shirts and carried big-mouthed guns. They came, they remained with us for a time, and went away, promising to return, but they did not keep their promise. Many winters passed, and then came another kind of white men, the kind we later named Red Coats. North of us, on the Assiniboine River, they built trading-posts and asked my people to go there to trade. We could not do that, our ene-

Earth Woman begins her Story

mies, Assiniboinés, Crees, and Sioux, barred the way, so the white men would now and then bring pack-trains of goods to us, and charge us terrible prices for everything that we bought. The first white men, as my man often told me, were those of the Frenchman, the *Sieur de la Verendrie*. The next were English, traders from the *Nor'wester Company*. And now came, greatest and best of all, the Long Knives. Several days before they arrived, my people had word of their coming. They came, and oh, the wonder of it all: their big boats with sails; the big gun in the largest boat that boomed with a noise almost as loud as thunder; the many strange utensils that the people stared and stared at, wondering for what purposes they were used. Not the least strange and interesting was the black white man they had with them, black as coal and with black, curly hair.

Soon after they arrived our Mandan and Minnetaree and Black Moccasins chiefs held a council with the white chiefs, who gave them beautiful and valuable presents. In this council the white chiefs told why they had come to our country: they had been sent by the great chief of the Long Knives to get all tribes of Indians to make peace with one

Bird Woman

another, and they were going to make a trail westward clear to the Great Salt Water, which Long Knives traders would follow to bring trade goods to the different tribes living along it. A thousand times have I heard my father and mother, and Tsaka'kawia, and others tell the tale of what followed that council; and as it is here that Tsaka'kawia's part in it all begins, you shall have her story of it in her own words, as nearly as I can remember them. She always began it with a little prayer to the gods. Listen! Here it is!

VIII

BIRD WOMAN MEETS LEWIS AND CLARK

SO this is Tsaka'kawia's own story, as told to Mrs. Kipp and by her repeated to me:—

Pity me, gods of my people, gods of my far mountain country! Freshen my memory, that I may tell all I know about the great white chiefs, my good, generous white chiefs, and all that happened on my journey with them to the Great Salt Water, and back to this, my Minnetaree home!

I did not, of course, attend the great council of our chiefs with the Long Knife chiefs; women were not allowed in it. But my man was there, and as soon as it was over he came to me and said: "The Long Knife chiefs will winter here with us, and when they go on westward they want a guide to show them the way, and some one to take them to the Snakes, in order to purchase horses from them. They will need many horses for riding and for carrying their goods when they arrive at the head of the river and leave their boats —"

Bird Woman

"They cannot take their boats to the head of the river; they will not be able to get them up over the big falls, a long way this side of the mountains," I told him.

"Oh, well, wherever they abandon the boats, there they must have horses with which to go on. I shall tell them that I will be their guide and interpreter."

"But you do not know the way, you cannot even understand my Snake language!" I told him.

"Fool!" he cried. "You shall show me the way — and I will lead them to your people!"

Can you imagine how my heart beat when he said that? Here, after all the years, was a chance to see my own people again! At the thought of it I was so happy that I cried. And Otter Woman was happy, too. She sprang up and danced around and around, crying, "We are going to the mountains! We are going to the mountains! We shall see our Snake people, our dear relations!"

"Come! Let us go to the Long Knives at once, and tell them that we will guide them, and interpret for them," I said.

"No! We shall let them find out that we are the only ones that can do this for them. Then they will

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

come to us about it, and so we shall get bigger pay than if we ran to them to offer our services," our man answered.

As our man said, so it had to be. Oh, how anxious Otter Woman and I became as the days passed and we had no word from the white men! Our man became anxious, too, and one day went down and visited the white men, where they were building a fort, some distance below the lower Mandan village. They said nothing to him about engaging us at that time. More and more long days passed. We became more and more uneasy, and finally our man took us down to visit the whites and to see their fort. It was not completed, but we were filled with wonder at it, the first white men's building that we had ever seen. It was wonderful how they had put heavy logs one on top of another, up and up to make the walls. As a great rock is in the middle of a river's swift current, so was that fort there in the timbered bottom. Storms could not even shake it. Nor could all the warriors of our three tribes take it by attack, for there were cunningly cut holes in the walls through which the whites could shoot their many guns and kill off the attackers as they came!

Bird Woman

The great white chiefs, Long Knife and Red Hair, greeted us very pleasantly, and made us feel that we were really welcome in their camp. They showed their many strange things, things beautiful and useful, and made us presents of some of them. They had us to eat with them, too, and at that evening meal Otter Woman and I first tasted bread; we thought it the best-flavored food that we had ever eaten. Just as soon as I looked at those two white chiefs, and put my hand in theirs, my heart went out to them, for I knew that, although very brave, truly fearless of all things, yet were they of gentle heart. I could not keep my eyes off them. I felt that I wanted to work for them; to do all that I could for them. Think, then, how happy I was when, that very evening, it was arranged that we should all come and live with them as soon as their fort was completed, our man to be their Minnetaree interpreter, and hunter at times. Nothing was then said about our going west with them in the spring, but I felt sure that that would be asked of us later on.

A few days later the fort was completed, and we moved down with our belongings and were given a room in it. Oh, what a pleasant place that room

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

was, with its fireplace, its windows of oiled skin, and its comfortable couches! The white men visited us in it, and we often visited in their rooms, especially the room of the two chiefs. They were always having visitors from the villages above, and were always getting them to describe what they knew of the country and the people who inhabited it, especially those to the west of us. Night after night they got me to tell them about my Snake people and their country, and I told them all, even to telling them how my people were persecuted by the Blackfeet, the Minnetarees, the Assiniboinés, and how I, myself, had been taken into captivity. I told them, too, that my people starved more than half the time, because, without guns, they were driven from the plains by their powerful enemies every time that they came out after buffalo. And at that Long Knife and Red Hair both told me that one of their objects in coming to the country was to make peace between all the tribes in it, and, anyhow, if they would not agree to that, the traders who would follow the trail that they were to make would furnish my Snake people plenty of guns, and they would then be able to hold their own against all enemies.

Bird Woman

Those were happy days for us, there in the fort of the white men. I was happier than I had ever been, until the time came for me to have my child, and then I suffered terribly. There was another Frenchman and his family with us in the fort, and I could see by the way he talked with the white chiefs that he thought I was about to die. I thought so myself, and, oh, I did n't want to die! I wanted to live! I prayed the gods to help me! At last, when I thought that I could bear the pain no longer, the white chiefs and the Frenchman got together and decided to give me a powerful medicine. I took it. It was powerful; soon after I drank it I gave birth to my child, and then, when I found that it was a boy, I was happier than ever. And what do you think was the medicine that they gave me? You could never guess. It was the rattles of a poison snake, crushed fine in water! It may be that I would not have drank it had I known what it was, and when all was over I was glad that they had not told me.

From the very first day of their arrival in the country, the people of the Earth House tribes had been very friendly with the Long Knives. They now suddenly became less friendly, very few of

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

them visiting the fort, and I wondered why it was. I was soon to learn the reason: Traders from the fort of the Nor'westers, on the Assiniboine River, were constantly coming south to the villages with pack-trains of goods and going back with the furs that they bought. The leader of these traders was a Frenchman, named Rock, a man well liked by the chiefs of the three tribes. After a trip north, he had returned with another pack-train of goods, and, calling a council of all the chiefs of the Mandans, Minnetarees, and Black Moccasins, he told them that he had a message for them from the great chief of his company. "These are the words of my chief," he orated. "The Long Knives who are with you are not what they would have you believe they are. They talk big, but they are nothing! Their great chief, away to the east, is a very small chief and they are a very small, poor people! The two chiefs now with you, Long Knife and Red Hair, make you great promises of what they will do for you. Do not believe them, they are liars, they will do nothing for you! If you wish to keep my friendship, if you wish me to continue sending trade goods to your villages, you will do nothing for them. Especially you will not furnish guides

Bird Woman

nor interpreters to help them on their way to the west. They gave you flags and medals. Throw them away and take these that I give you, for they are great medicine, while those of the Long Knives are the signs of a very poor and weak and no-account people!" And with that Rock handed to the head chiefs the flags and medals, and also some coats of red cloth trimmed with gold braid. These last were very beautiful; the chiefs thought them the finest presents that they had ever received. In answer to what Rock demanded of them they said that they would do all that his trader chief asked. And then they went home to talk it all over among themselves. Their minds were all mixed up; they did not know whom to believe nor what to do in this matter.

It was an old Minnetaree, come to visit me, that brought word of this council with Rock. At the time my man was off down the river with a hunting party, but there was another Frenchman with us, who was married to a Minnetaree and spoke that language, and when he came in from a hunt across the river, I got him to go with me to Long Knife and Red Hair and interpret for me. Through him I told them all that I had just learned, and I

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

could see that they were very much worried about it. They said that I was a good woman to come at once to them with what I had heard, and gave me some sugar and shook hands with me when I turned to go back to my room.

On the very next day Black Cougar, the head chief of the Mandans, and others came to the fort, and Long Knife and Red Hair told them that they had heard all about their council with Rock, and were very sorry that they had believed his lies and accepted his gifts. They then explained that the Nor'westers had no right to trade south of the rivers running to the north, but that, until Long Knife traders could come, which would be soon, they would be allowed to keep on trading in the villages. Finally, they told Black Cougar and his men that there was but one great white chief, the Long Knife chief, who would be their true friend as long as they would do as he asked. In reply, Black Cougar promised for himself and all the other village chiefs that the Nor'wester presents would never be used, and that, in the future, they would regard the great Long Knife chief as their head chief, and all that he asked of them they would do.

Bird Woman

Now, when my man came home and heard all about this trouble, he was very angry at me for having told Long Knife and Red Hair about Rock's council with the chiefs. "Men's business is not women's business," he said. "Hereafter, no matter what you learn that concerns the Nor'westers, just you keep your mouth shut about it!"

"But you are working for the Long Knives; I am your woman; it is but right that we should help them in all ways that we can," I told him.

"It may be that I shall not continue to work for them," he answered. "I do not like them. They make me work too hard. They give me too many rules to follow and not enough pay for what I do. It may be that I can fix it so that the Nor'westers will pay me a great deal just to quit these Long Knives!"

And with that he went out of the room grumbling bad words, and I cried. Every day I had been expecting that the Long Knives chiefs would ask us to go west with them; and now, if they did ask us, my man would refuse to go! I had been counting upon seeing my own people again. The chances were that I should never see them! Do you wonder that I had no heart left in me that night?

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

More days passed. Whenever he could leave the fort and his work, my man would go to the lower Mandan village, there to talk with the Nor'wester traders, and finally, some of them, going north after more goods, took a message from him to their chief. It was that, if the chief would give him a certain sum, — I never knew how much, — he would quit the service of the Long Knives. In about a moon he got his answer. The trader chief sent him word that, having left the company when he was most needed, he could stay quit; that the Nor'westers wanted nothing more to do with him. Oh, but he was mad when he got that message. But Otter Woman and I were glad. We believed that he would continue in the service of the Long Knives and that we should go west with them to our people.

More time went by, and more and more the Long Knives chiefs talked with us about our country, got us to make pictures of it, and show them where we thought they would be likely to meet our Snake people. And then, one day, — oh, what a happy day that was for me, — they asked my man if he would go west with them in the spring and take me along with him?

Bird Woman

"And my other woman, Otter Woman, too?" my man asked.

Long Knife pointed to her. "She begins to grow big with child," he said. "She would have it somewhere along the trail; she would be sick. No, we cannot take her; if we did we should lose much time, and we shall have no time, not a day to spare."

"But you mistake; you do not understand," my man told him. "These Indian women, they are different; they are not like white women. True, my Otter Woman will have her child, but that will not delay you. She will just stop back and have it, say, in the morning, and before night she will catch up with you!"

"Even were she to do that, quickly, as you say, we could not take her," said the other chief, Red Hair. "She would take up boat room that we need for our goods, and she would be one more to feed. No, Toussaint, we cannot take her."

I wanted to say something for her, but I knew that it would be useless; had we not already learned that when these chiefs said no, they meant it? Otter Woman, crying bitterly, turned and went out of the room. My man, standing by my side,

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

was silent a long time; and then he said to the chiefs: "I can, of course, leave her with the Minnetarees, with the family of the man who captured her from the Snakes, but if I do I shall have to pay them for caring for her. Perhaps you will pay them — a blanket, maybe, or tobacco, some beads, a knife, or whatever?"

"Yes. We will give them something for their trouble," Red Hair agreed.

"Then it is settled. My woman, here, and I go with you," said my man. And we went to our room, where we found Otter Woman crying harder than ever.

"Cease crying!" my man shouted to her. But she could not stop. I did all that I could to comfort her, but in disappointment like that words are of little use. She cried all night, and at times for days afterward.

At that time nothing was said as to what pay my man should get for going west with the Long Knives. Later on they had some talk with him about it, but I never did know how much they promised him. At first he said that it was enough, and then he became discontented and said that it was not enough; that is, he complained to me

Bird Woman

about it, but said nothing to the white men. One day he told the chiefs that he had learned that some Minnetarees, camping and hunting out at the Turtle Buttes, had plenty of meat to spare, and that if they would send him to them with a few trade goods, he would bring in some loads of it. They agreed to do that, and he started off with several horses, some goods, and a man to help him, and I watched him go with heavy heart. Men of the Hudson's Bay Company were trading in that Minnetaree camp, and I feared that he was just making an excuse to go to them and try to get pay from their chief to quit these kind Long Knives chiefs. I never learned what he said to them, but whatever it was, their answer displeased him, for upon his return he told Long Knife and Red Hair just what was going on in the camp. The Hudson's Bay men were telling the Minnetarees that the Long Knives were a poor people and liars and thieves, and that they should kill them off, for if they did n't, then the Long Knives would soon steal all their land and kill off all their food and fur animals. Following that, my white chiefs told all the Indians who came to visit in the fort that they were sorry to learn that the North traders were

Bird Woman meets Lewis and Clark

telling such terrible lies about them. Time, they said, would prove that the Long Knives were their true friends. Well, they looked so honest when they said that, and were so kind, that the Indians believed them, and became more friendly with them than they had been.

IX

UP THE BIG RIVER

WELL, spring came on, and at about the time the ice in the river began to break, more Nor'wester traders came to the villages with goods, and this time they came with a message from their chief to my man. If he would quit the Long Knives and do all that he could to hinder them going on west, then he would be taken back into the employ of the Nor'wester Company.

My man considered this proposal. "The trader chief says one thing to me and then another," he complained to me, "and I don't know what to do."

"You have promised the Long Knives that we will go west with them, and you must keep that promise," I told him.

"It is not a matter of promises; it is for me to determine what will be best for me in the long time to come," he answered, and went off without telling me what he intended to do.

He soon came back and told us to pack our

Up the Big River

things as soon as we could, for he had quit the Long Knives, and we were going to the upper Minnetaree village. Otter Woman and I cried and cried as we gathered our little belongings. I felt as though my heart was going dead within me. I did not want to part from the kind Long Knives chiefs. And my hope of taking them to my Snake people — oh, I felt that this end to all my happy plans would kill me!

It was late in the day when we left the fort, and then, a storm coming suddenly from the north, we rode only to the lower Mandan village and took shelter in the lodge of Black Cougar.

Later on Rock and other Nor'westers came in, and Rock said to my man: "Well, so you have really done as we wanted you to do. You have quit the Long Knives!"

"Yes, I quit them!" my man answered.

"How did you do it?" Rock asked.

"I put the blame of our parting upon them!" he laughed. "I said that, if I went with them, it would be as an interpreter and guide only; that I would not, of course, have to take part in the work of their soldier men, and that I should be free to take the back trail at any time.

Bird Woman

“‘We cannot engage you upon any such terms as that,’ the Long Knife chief told me. ‘If you go with us, you go as interpreter, of course, and also as one of our soldiers, and so you must do your share of whatever work there will be.’

“‘Then must we part, and the parting may as well be now,’ I said, ‘for, as you can well see, I am getting on in age and am not strong enough to do hard work.’”

At that every one laughed, and Rock said to my man: “You old fox! You can always be trusted to get out of a tight hole!”

But I, you can be sure that I did not laugh! That very night, as soon as the visitors were gone, I began to talk to my man.

“Ever since the day you won me in that hide-the-bone game,” I said, “I have said to you not one cross word! I have worked hard for you, I have borne you a son. But now, though you kill me for it, I am going to tell you truth: You are a bad man, a lazy man, a liar! You made a promise to those good, kind white men, and you have broken it, and by doing that you have brought terrible shame upon me and upon my son, and when he becomes old enough I shall tell him what a bad man his

Up the Big River

father is, unless you do what I ask. Now, I want you to go back to the Long Knives chiefs and tell them that you are sorry, that you take back what you said, that you will go with them upon the long trail, and do as they order you to do in all things at all times!"

"Shut your mouth! This matter is none of your business!" he told me.

"I will shut my mouth now, but to-morrow I shall tell you some more of your mean ways, and on the next day, and the next day, and every day thereafter, I shall tell you more and more about your mean ways, while I am making up my mind what to do, something that will make you very sorry. Now, sleep if you can. I don't see how it will be possible for you to sleep. Were I in your place, I should not be able to sleep; thoughts of my badness would keep me awake!"

He did not strike me when I said that, nor even answer me, and so I knew that I really had set him to thinking about what he had done. And I kept my promise: for three days I said something to him at every chance I got, about his meanness in breaking with the Long Knives chiefs, each time promising that I was going to do some-

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thing terrible, because I could not bear the shame of it.

And at last, on the fourth day, I told him just what that terrible thing was to be: "I am going to give your son and myself to the Under-Water gods!" I told him. "Watch me as you will, sooner or later the chance will come, and into the deep river we go!"

"You would not dare do that!" he said.

"If there was anything worse to do, that I would do in order to wipe out the shame you have brought upon me, and upon this our little son!" I told him.

He made no answer to that, nor even looked at me. He sat there in the lodge a long time, thinking, thinking, and then he went out. When he came back he did not tell me what he had done: he had got one of Black Cougar's sons to go to the Long Knives chiefs and say to them that, if they should again ask him to go with them, he would probably agree to do so. That came out when the boy returned, and, entering the lodge, told him that the white chiefs had given him no answer. At that he became very uneasy. I could see his hands tremble as he filled his pipe. He looked at me and

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then at the fire, time and again, and at last he said to me: "Well, have your way! You can go to your white chiefs and tell them that I am ashamed that I left them, and that I will go with them and do as they say in all things."

Oh, oh, how glad I was when he told me that! I wrapped my son well and put him upon my back and ran out of the lodge. A horse was tied near by. I never asked who owned it, nor if it was gentle. I just took it and rode as hard as I could go down to the fort and was let into the white chiefs' room. Their half-Indian man, Drouillard, who was a good sign-user, was there. In signs I gave him my man's message, and he told it to the chiefs, and they laughed and shook hands with me and told me to tell my man to come back, that the little trouble with him was now forgotten. And they told me, too, that I was a good woman, and that they liked me very much. They were so kind that they made me cry a little, and I was so happy that I just could not eat the food they had their black man set before me. As soon as I could I went out and got on the horse, and hurried back to my man and told him what the chiefs had answered. He said nothing, but went out and had the horses brought in, and

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back we went to the fort. And so that trouble ended.

The ice now went out of the river, and every one worked hard preparing for the start westward. The whites had built some small boats during the winter, and these were now made waterproof. Otter Woman was crying most of the time, because she could not go with us, and I comforted her all that I could, promising again and again to deliver to her relatives all the messages that she gave me for them. And over and over she told me that, as soon as her child was born and she became able to travel, she would run away from the Minnetaree village and try to find our Snake people. I advised her not to think of doing that. I told her that, if she escaped the many bears and many war parties that were sure to be along the way, she must, anyhow, die from want of food. But up to the time we parted she insisted that she would make the attempt, for she would rather die on the trail than remain with the Minnetarees without me at her side. On the morning that our man took her to the upper village, she went almost crazy when we parted, and I was so distressed that I became sick for a time.

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Upon my man's return to the fort the boats were all loaded. We had two large ones and six small ones, and we abandoned the fort and headed up the river. At the same time that we started, Long Knife and Red Hair sent their very large boat down the river in charge of some of their men. It was loaded with many skins, bones, and other things, presents for the great chief of the whites. Counting in my son, we were thirty-three people in our eight boats. I was given a place in one of the two large ones.

As we went on and on up the river, sometimes making a long distance between the rising and the setting of the sun, I was, at times, I believe, happier than I had ever been in my life, for each day's travel brought me so much nearer my people whom I so much longed to see. Then at other times, whenever I thought of what was before us, I would become very unhappy. I would say to myself that we could not possibly survive the dangers we should be sure to encounter along the way. I may as well say it: my good, kind white chiefs were not cautious; they were too brave, too sure of themselves. From the very start they and their men would foolishly risk their lives by attacking all the

Bird Woman

man-killing bears that came in sight of us. At night they would build great fires that would be sure to attract to us any wandering war party that might be in the country. After we passed the mouth of the Yellowstone and entered the country of the Blackfeet, I begged my chiefs to be more cautious. I asked them to stop always a short time before dark and build little cooking-fires, and then, after our meal, to put out the fires, and then go on until dark and make camp in the darkness. But they only laughed at me, and answered: "We have good guns and know how to use them. Big fires are a great comfort to us, so we must have them."

I often said to myself: "Strange are these white men! Strange their ways! They have a certain thing to do, to make a trail to the west to the Everywhere-Salt-Water. Why, then, are we not on horseback and traveling fast and far each day? Here we are in boats, heavily loaded with all kinds of useless things, and when the wind is bad or the water swift, we make but little distance between sun and sun! We could have got all the horses that we needed from the Earth House tribes, and had we done that, we should long since have arrived at

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the mountains. Yes, right now I should probably be talking with my own people!"

And those medicine packages of theirs, packages big and little piled all around me in the boat in which I rode, how my chiefs valued them! One day a sudden hard wind struck our sail and the boat began to tip and fill with water. More and more it filled, and the men in it and those on the shore went almost crazy with fear. But I was not afraid. Why should I be when I knew that I could cast off my robe and swim ashore with my little son? More and more water poured into the boat and the medicine packages began to float out of it. I seized them one by one as they were going, and kept seizing them and holding them, and when, at last, we reached the shore, my good white chiefs acted as though I had done a wonderful thing in saving their packages; it seemed as though they could not thank me enough for what I had done. Thinking about it, after it was all over, and when the things had been spread out to dry, I said to myself: "Although I cannot understand them, these little instruments of shining steel and these writings on thin white paper must be powerful medicine. Hereafter, whenever we run into danger,

Bird Woman

I shall, after my son, have my first thought for their safety, and so please my kind white chiefs."

After leaving the mouth of Little River, or, as my white chiefs named it, Milk River, we went up through a part of the Big River Valley that I had not seen, for, when I was captured by the Minnetarees, we had, after leaving the valley at the mouth of Bear River, struck across to Little River and then followed it down. We were many, many days in getting the boats up this long, winding, and ever swifter part of the river. The farther up it we went the more I looked for signs of the enemy, the Blackfeet, and their war brothers, the Big Belies, but, look as I would, I could never find even a single footprint that they had made nor any tracks of their horses. I thought that very strange. When we arrived at the mouth of the stream my white chiefs named the Musselshell, some of the men went up it during the afternoon, and, returning, told of a stream coming into it from the plain on the right. My chiefs then told me that it should have my name, as they called it, Sah-ka-ja'-we-ah.

I asked my man to tell them that I wished they would give it my right name, Bo-i'-naiv, Grass Woman.

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But he laughed at me, and answered: "Never mind! It does n't matter what they call it!"

I thought that it did matter, but I could not at that time speak French more than a few words, and so I was bashful about asking them to make the change.

"It seemed to matter when they named a creek after you," I said. "You were pleased enough!"

"Yes, but I am a man! Important! Women,—their names to things do not matter," he answered. And I said nothing more. What could I say? Nothing.

It was some days after passing the mouth of the Other-Side-Bear-River, the Musselshell, that we arrived at the mouth of a small river coming in from the south, and there came upon a not long deserted camp-ground of the enemy, either Blackfeet or their war brothers, the Big Bellies. There had been a great camp of them at the mouth of the small river, and another opposite it on the north side of Big River. Just below the little river they had decoyed a herd of buffalo to death over a cliff, and wolves were still eating the meat of old and poor animals that the hunters had not thought worth taking. As I looked at the aban-

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doned fireplaces of the camp, I said to myself: "It will not be long before we are discovered by the enemies who were recently here, and when that happens our end will come! Brave though my white chiefs and their men are, they are too few to win a fight with the hundreds of warriors who will come against them!" My heart was very low as we went on up the river. I felt that, after all, I was not to see my country and my people again. I made up my mind that I would not be captured again; before the enemy could lay hands upon me, I would kill my little son, and then myself! I now kept constant watch of the river bottoms ahead, and the tops of the cliffs on each side of the narrow valley, expecting at every turn we made to see the enemy approaching us.

At last we came, one morning, to the mouth of Bear River ¹ and made camp. I was now in country that I knew. Here I had left Big River with my Minnetaree captors, and struck off across the plain to Little River. On horseback it was but a day from here up to the falls of Big River. Look as I would, I could find no fresh signs of the enemy, not a fireplace, not a track of man or horse, and I

¹ Maria's River.

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began to think that we might, after all, reach the mountains without being discovered by the Blackfeet. I prayed for that! Oh, how I prayed the gods to keep the eyes of the enemy from us while we went on and on to the head of the river and over the mountains to my people!

To my surprise, after my white chiefs had made medicine with their strange instruments, we did not go on. One of the chiefs went up Big River and the other up Bear River, each with a few men, leaving us to be easily killed by the enemy should they discover us. Red Hair, who went up Big River, was gone from us three days, and Long Knife, who went up Bear River, did not return until the evening of the fifth day. After his return we remained there still another day, drying our things after the heavy rain that had fallen, hiding some of them in a hole the men dug in the ground, and leaving one of our boats on an island. And why, do you think, they were gone so long up the two rivers? They were all that time learning which of them was Big River, the one that they wanted to follow! And there I was; I could have told them which one it was, and they had not asked me! When my man told me what they had been doing

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I scolded him, and asked him to tell Long Knife and Red Hair that I was very sorry they had not told me what was their trouble, for I could have saved them these five days of wandering. He would not do it. "I can't. They would then blame me for not having asked you about it," he answered. Ah, well, that is one great fault in men: they think that women are so foolish that it is a waste of time to question them about anything!

On our last night at the mouth of Bear River, I fell sick. While I slept, some Blackfeet or other enemy ghost, wandering there, had found me and put its badness into my body. As we went on up the river I became more and more sick day by day, and began to think that I was about to die. If I did, then my little son, lacking the milk of my breast, would die, too. I said to myself that for his sake I must not die. I prayed and prayed the gods for help. I made sacrifice to them. I begged them to sustain life in me until I could reach their stinking-water spring at the falls and drink its healing water. They did help me. I fought and fought the ghost's evil that was inside me, and at last, when we neared the place, I told my man where the spring was, and sent him to bring me

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some of the water. I drank and drank it, and by the time we went into camp near the spring I began to feel better. Two days later I was worse again, but I continued to pray to the gods, and drink the medicine water, and finally the evil work of the enemy ghost went from me.

I had thought that when we arrived at the long stretch of falls and swift water in the river, we should abandon the boats and go on to my country on foot. But no! As soon as we arrived at the first of the bad water, the men began at once to cut down a big tree from which to saw round pieces upon which to draw the boats — all but the largest one — the long, rough, and steep way to the almost-still water above the upper falls, and this caused a long delay, many days of hard toil. And while their men worked, dragging the boats upon the log slices up the trail, and carrying the many packages of goods upon their backs, Long Knife and Red Hair made medicine with their queer, little instruments at each of the falls, not once but many times. I could not understand why they did that; it seemed to me useless work. They were making a trail to the west. Well, no boats nor men could go up over the falls, so why not plainly mark

Bird Woman

the beginning of the trail around them and its end up at the still water and be done with it? That was the one fault with my good white chiefs: they were — I hate to say it — time-wasters.

At last a camp was made above the falls, and one day we in the lower camp started out to move the last of the boats and the goods packages up to it. I went ahead of the party with Red Hair, the black white man, and my man. It was a bad day; low, black clouds everywhere shutting out the blue, and rain falling. We had not gone very far on the trail when there came a terrible wind and the hardest rain that I ever saw. The black white man was on ahead. Red Hair, my man, and I ran down into a coulee and stood under a rock wall that formed its right bank. The rain came harder and harder until it made the day so dark that we could no more than see the other bank of the coulee, not ten steps across from us. I knew that so heavy a rain would soon make a river where we stood, and was about to tell my man that we had best get out of the coulee, when, suddenly, we saw a great flood of it coming down upon us. I had set my little son down at my feet, spreading his wraps upon his carrying-case for him to lie upon, and as I

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snatched him up, Red Hair and my man seized hold of me and we made a run for the steep bank across the way. Before we could reach it the water began to rise and foam about us, and roll stones that bruised our legs and nearly took us off our feet. And who do you think it was that saved me and my little son? My man? No. By his hard pulling and pushing, Red Hair saved the three of us from being taken by the awful rise of roaring water and stones down the coulee into Big River, and down it to our death in the falls! Can you wonder that I loved Red Hair more than ever? When I was sick he tried to doctor me; he was always doing something for me and my little son; and now he had, at the risk of his own life, saved us from death in the terrible flood. He was a real father to me. From that time on to the end of our long trail I did all the poor little things that I could for him. He was the best man that I ever knew! My man, Charboneau,—I have said some hard things about him. I shall say some more. But do not think that I hated him. He was the father of my child. He was a child himself—for all his bigness and strength, nothing but a child. And so I pitied him, and did all that I could for his comfort, yes,

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to the very end, although at times it was hard to do.

I had thought that, when we got the boats and the goods packages to the head of the falls, we should at once go on. But no! The men were putting a covering of skins upon a boat frame of iron pieces which had been brought along for that purpose, and at last, when they finished it, they found that they had wasted their time: water leaked into it faster than they could bail it out! So then, in place of it, more small boats had to be built, and that took more of our time. I began to think that winter would set in before we could reach the mountains. Away up the river two cottonwood trees were found from which two boats could be made, and Red Hair took some of the men there and set them to work. The rest of us were several days moving to the place, and a part of the way I went on foot with Long Knife and another. Before we got to camp fear struck me again, for we came upon a recently deserted camp-ground of the enemy, either Blackfeet or Big Bellies. In the center of it they had put up a great lodge to their gods, the poles of which were cottonwood trees so large and heavy that I could not understand how they

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had managed to raise them. That night, in my sleep, I saw the enemy warriors making sacrifices to their gods there in the lodge, and saw them, too, dancing in it and waving fresh Snake scalps that they had taken. When day came, and I sat and looked at the mountains, as I had been doing for some days, I said to myself: "No, my people, you are nowhere there on those slopes! The enemy have camped here, they have hunted you out, killed some of you, and driven the survivors back across the range, there again to starve!" I was very sad-feeling that day and for days afterward. I no longer watched the valley and its slopes for the possible appearance of my people, sneaking out from the mountains to kill a few buffalo. I watched instead for the enemy, expecting them to appear at any time and charge into our camp and kill us all!

At last the two new boats were finished, and we loaded the old and the new ones, and again set out upon our way into the west. We were now in country that I well knew, — every bottom and bend and slope of it; and memories of what had here happened, and there, in my girlhood days, made me laugh at times and at times cry. That

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is, I did so at first. Then I took strong hold of myself: "If you act this way," I said, "Red Hair and Long Knife will think that you have gone crazy!" Thereafter, no matter how I felt, I gripped the boat hard and hard shut my teeth, and so made myself appear as calm as a little lakelet on a windless day.

As we made our way up into the mountains the river, of course, became more swift and our progress more and more slow. More than ever I hated the boats; at times it was hard for me to keep from leaving them, from taking my little son upon my back and hurrying on in search of my people. At every camp we made I looked for signs of them, and then, one day, we came to a place where they had been camped. Oh, how glad I was when I saw that camp-ground, for I had feared that they were all dead, had all been killed by the people of the plains. But, no! As usual, they had been out after buffalo during the winter, and with the coming of summer had made their way back into the mountains. I could tell by the growth of grass around the fireplaces that they had camped here in early spring. I wondered how far back they had gone. I feared that they had gone through the pass and

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then away down to the south; if they had, we should never see them.

One evening, soon after we had come upon a second old camp of my people, Red Hair and Long Knife held a long council with some of the men. My man was in it, but after it was ended he did not tell me what it was all about. I did not learn until the next day, after Red Hair and his black white man and two others had left us, that it had been decided they should go on ahead to try to find my people and make friends with them. I was very angry when my man told me that: "Why am I here but to do that very thing!" I scolded. "Should my people see Red Hair and his men approaching them, they would run and hide from them; perhaps lie in wait for them and kill them. But if I were with them, it would be different. I would travel far in the lead, and make myself known to my people as soon as I sighted them, and then all would be well with us!"

It was on the following day, or maybe the day after that, that we saw a great smoke rising from a mountain-slope far ahead of us, and as it rose up and up into the blue, my heart almost went dead within me. "There! Now you have done it!" I

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scolded my man. "By not telling me what you were counseling about with our chiefs, it is you who will be to blame for whatever happens! That big smoke is a sign smoke of my people: it warns all who see it that enemies have been discovered, and that all should retreat at once back into the mountains. It is your fault! Had I gone with Red Hair, this would not have happened!"

"Woman, just you mind your woman business and I will mind my man business!" he answered.

I could say nothing more. I felt too sad, too sick to talk.

Red Hair and his men were gone from us three days, during which we kept boating on up the river. When we met them, they told us that they had gone as far as the grass-burning, but had seen no Indians nor any fresh signs of them. I said nothing to that. I knew very well that my people had seen them, and had retreated from them without leaving a trail that could be followed. Some days later, after another council, Red Hair again went on ahead with a few of the men, and this time my man went with him. I knew nothing about the council until the following morning when my man took up a blanket and his gun and started off, say-

Up the Big River

ing to me: "I go with Red Hair in search of your people! If they are in the country, I shall find them!" Yes, that was all that he said to me! Ever since I had scolded him he had been angry at me. And he was jealous of me: he wanted to be the one to bring about the meeting of the Long Knives and my Snake people. Almost I could have laughed; he was such a little child in many of his ways!

This time Red Hair and his followers were gone from us six days, without having found my people nor fresh signs of them. Both Red Hair and my man had become sick, and in crossing a stream my man had come very near drowning. Also he had got sore feet. Again I almost laughed when he came limping to where I was by the fire and sat down with much groaning, and in a small voice asked me to give him food.

We had this day passed the meeting-place of the three rivers that make Big River, and were camped right where, many summers back, my people were camped when the Minnetarees attacked us. When our evening meal was over I took my little son upon my back and went all over that camp-ground. I found the very stone-ringed fireplace that my mother and my sisters and I had made, the one in

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which we had built our last fire together, and cooked our last meal for our men and for ourselves. I sat down before it, and touched those stones that my mother and my sisters had placed there, and cried. Where were they, my relatives? Was it possible that they were still alive? Oh, how I prayed that they were, and that I might soon meet them somewhere up there in the great mountains!

We remained in this camp several days, and then, after resuming our way, soon came to the place where the Minnetaree had pursued me into the river and snatched me up before him on his horse. A hundred times I had dreamed about it, awaking with shrieks of terror! A hundred times I had seen the place with my dream eyes, and now I saw it with my awake eyes, and could see no change in it since that terrible day of my capture. No, there had been no change in it. The crumbling bank sloping down to the ford was still there; the wide, swift water on the ford was no deeper; and the timber on the far shore remained as it had been, untouched by fire, unswept by the floods of spring. But I had changed. I was no longer the little girl that had been snatched up out there in the river, and had tried to scratch and bite her captor as she

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was borne away. Right there I asked myself if I was sorry that I had been captured, and I had to answer that I was not sorry. True, I had suffered much at first, but my captor — all the Minnetarees — had been good to me. True, I had lost my Mandan sweetheart, and I had not wanted to become the white man's woman, but those sorrows were over. During all the winters and summers since I had been carried away from this place I had lived in warm lodges, safe from all enemies, had been given plenty of good food and good clothing, and, best of all, I had become a mother — I had my little son, snuggling warm at my breast. What I had suffered from being taken from my people was nothing to the happiness I had gained through having him. And had I not been captured, I should never have met these great white chiefs with whom I was traveling, and for whom I felt that I would die if that were necessary for their happiness. They were so great, so wise, brave, and good, that at times I felt that they must be more than just men, that they must be gods!

After passing the place of my capture Long Knife took my man and several others with him, and set out ahead to try to find my people. I asked

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Long Knife to allow me to go, too, but that was not to be. He answered that he would gladly take me along with my man were it not for my little son. With him to carry and care for, he believed that I could not stand the hardships that they were sure to encounter. And so they went on and were absent from us a number of days, coming to our camp again as we were passing the Beaver's Head. They had found no fresh signs of my people. My man was worn out, his feet very sore. I gave him some marrow grease to rub into them.

On the following day Long Knife again went on ahead with three men, taking for one of them the half-Indian, Drouillard, in place of my man, for he, too, was a good sign-talker. Again I begged to be taken along with the lead party, begged harder than ever, for we were now right up in the edge of the country of my people, and I feared that, without me with them to explain that they were friends, my people would attack and kill them. I had known ever since I had seen that smoke signal, some days back, that my people were aware that we were moving up the valley, and that, of course, they believed we were a war party of their enemies. As I entreated Long Knife now to take me with him

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and his men, I could see that he had a mind to do it. I felt hopeful that he would. And then my man told him that he did not want me to go; that, with my little child, my place was in the boat! That ended it. Long Knife laughed a little, said something to Red Hair, told me that he was sorry he could not take me along, and then departed with his men. I was so disappointed that I cried!

X

WITH HER OWN PEOPLE AGAIN

DAYS passed. We made slow progress up the swift, and now often shallow, river, so shallow that, for the most of the time, I walked ahead on the shore while the men dragged the boats over the bars. One morning, as soon as the start for the day was made, Red Hair and my man and I went on ahead of the boats. We had not traveled far up along the shore when I discovered some riders hurrying toward us. They were rounding a bend, were close upon us. I could see their faces. I did not recognize them. How could I after all these winters? But by their dress, by the very shape of their bodies, I knew that these riders were my own people, some of them, perhaps, my very own relatives.

I raised my hands to them in greeting. I cried out to them: "My people! My people! I am your long-lost Grass Woman!" And then I whirled around and signed to Red Hair, who was behind me: "These are my people! These are my people!"



I CRIED OUT TO THEM: "MY PEOPLE! MY PEOPLE! I AM YOUR LONG-LOST
GRASS WOMAN!"

With her own People again

And then I turned again and ran to meet them, crying, laughing, and so happy, so filled up with happiness that I went almost crazy with it. And now I saw that our half-Indian man was with them, that he had on Snake clothing, and by that I knew that Long Knife was safe, that my people had not killed him, and I felt that the gods had been more than good to us, that more happiness than I had right then would kill me!

And now we met, these riders and I, and again I called out to them my name, and they cried: "Yes! Yes! We know you, Grass Woman! This is a great day! This is a medicine day, this day of your return to us!" And then they raised our Snake song of greeting and happiness, and turned and went on up the bottom with us, up around the bend toward the camp that they had made, and where, one of them told me, a number of my people, with the white chief and his men, awaited our coming.

As we neared the place some women advanced to meet us, and when they had come quite near, the lead one stopped suddenly and stared at me and I stared at her, and then, crying, laughing, crying, we ran together and hugged and kissed and

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kissed one another: "It is you! It is you, Grass Woman!" she cried.

I could not answer! I could not speak for the happiness that was in me, for this was Leaping Fish Woman, she who had so long since fled from the Minnetaree village. I had often thought of her, mourned for her. I had not believed that she could possibly escape the dangers of the long trail that she had to follow, and here she was! But, oh, how thin she was! Hunger stared at me out of her big, sunken eyes. I could see it in the eyes of the other women who came running to embrace me. It was with my people as it had ever been. And out there on the plain were countless herds of buffalo! Oh, how I wanted to help them, my persecuted, defenseless, helpless people!

We could not let go of each other, Leaping Fish Woman and I. We stood there in close embrace, she asking me question after question, the other women standing close around and listening to us, and then, suddenly, my man came to me and hurried me to where the Snake warriors were gathered with Red Hair and Long Knife in a small, poor lodge of willow brush. I was wanted to interpret for them. As I took my seat near the entrance and

With her own People again

laid my little son down in his wrappings, the chief asked one of his warriors to pass him a small pipe-loading stick. His voice sounded much like one that I had known, but somewhat deeper. I looked up at him. I knew him. He was my elder brother!

I sprang across to him, crying, "Oh, brother! Oh, Black Bow! Elder brother, don't you know me? I am your little sister, Grass Woman!" And with that I put my blanket around his shoulders and embraced and kissed him. I could feel him tremble.

"So you are!" he answered. "I recognize you! I am glad! But take courage! There must be no tears on my face, here, before these white chiefs. Take courage, little sister, and interpret for us!"

"I will try to do so," I answered. "But just think, brother! After all these winters I am here with you, here where I thought that I was never again to come!"

"Yes, truly, the gods have been kind," he answered. "But now dry your tears. Interpret to me the words of these white chiefs. After the council is ended, you and I will talk."

At that I tried my best to stop crying. Long Knife said a few words to my man, who interpreted

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them to me, and then I began to tell my brother what had been said. My thoughts were too much for me. I could not stop crying. I could not even remember what I was to interpret. My man got angry at me; called me bad names. But Red Hair and Long Knife took pity upon me; they saw how I felt, and at once halted the council, saying that they would put it off until I was myself again. They arose and went out, and I was left with my brother.

"Tell me all. Tell me about our family," I said to him.

"Our father was killed on the day that the enemy took you from us," he said.

"Yes, I know. I saw him dead and scalped beside the trail," I told him.

"Our mother is dead, and our two sisters. Our sister, Red Willow Woman, left a little boy. Our brother is not here. I sent him to one of our tribes with a message."

"Where is the little boy?" I asked, after I had cried some more.

"In our camp on the other side of the pass."

"Brother, give him to me. Let me be his mother. I will be a good mother to him," I said.

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"Take him. I know that you will be good to him," he answered. And thoughts of what I should do for the little one helped me dry my tears.

And now my brother began asking me many questions. He wanted to know all about my life with the Minnetarees; how many they were; how many guns they had and where they obtained them. And at last, after I had answered them all, and had told him much that he did not ask about, he said to me: "Truly, the gods are good to us. Here you are, returned to your own people. And here are these white men with many guns and much food for them. No longer shall we starve. I have sent messengers to all the tribes of our people and to the Flatheads, asking them to come and help us kill these white men. When we have done that and have taken their guns, we shall go out upon the plains and live there all the time, for we shall then be able to kill off the plains enemies when they come to attack us!"

When my brother said that I thought that he was joking. I looked at him, saw that he really meant what he had said, and my body went cold. What, kill my good, kind chiefs, and their men? Here was a terrible situation! And it was my own

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brother who was planning to do this! What could I say to him to make him change his mind? I prayed the gods to help me and began:—

“Brother,” I said, “these two white chiefs and their men have been good to me; if you kill them, I must die too!”

“What are their lives compared to the lives of our people?” he cried. “Nothing! Only by killing these white men and taking their guns can we go out and hold our own against our enemies on the buffalo plains!”

“For how long?” I asked. “After just one fight with your enemies you would have used up all the food for the guns. Then what would you do? Could you make more of the black sand, and more of the heavy, round balls? No, you could not! And after you had killed many of the enemy, those who survived would go home and gather together all the warriors of the three tribes of the Earth House people, and the number of those who would come to attack you would be as many as the grass. Not one of you would live to see these mountains again!”

“But you can help us! You must!” he cried. “You have been with the white men a long time

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and have seen them make gun food; you shall teach us how to make it!"

"Not even Red Hair and Long Knife, great chiefs though they are, know how to make the black sand," I told him. "I have inquired about that, and have learned that the making of it is a great secret, known only to some wonderful white medicine men who live far in the east."

My brother groaned. He humped over in his seat.

I saw that I had hit him, and went on: "I know these white men. Their talk is as straight as the straightest pine tree that you ever saw. They do not know how to lie. They say that they have come to make a trail from the far east to the shore of the Everywhere-Salt-Water, to make peace with the different tribes along the way, and to get the tribes to make peace with one another. They promise that white traders shall follow this trail, and bring to you plenty of guns and gun food, and plenty of all the different useful and beautiful things of white men's make. Brother, be wise! Do that which is best for us all. Send messengers at once to tell the warriors of the different tribes to remain where they are, for the white men are not to be attacked!"

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"You will not tell your white chiefs anything about this?" he asked.

"I should be ashamed to let them know that my brother had so foolishly made plans against them," I answered.

"I was foolish," he agreed, "but I meant well for my people. I just thought of the many guns we should get. Why — oh, why did n't I see at once that they would become as useless to us as the few that we have, as soon as the black sand that we should take with them should be used up! Yes. I will send a man at once to our camp on the other side of the pass, and he shall send messengers from there to the tribes to tell them that we are not to fight the white men!"

And at that he called a young man to us, and we both explained to him what he was to do, and away he went to camp to send out the messengers. So were my white chiefs and their men saved from sudden end there in the mountains.

That afternoon Red Hair and Long Knife held a great council with my brother and his men. They told why they had come to the country, what they would do for them, especially promising that traders should soon come to them with all the guns

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and things that they could use. They gave my brother and his head warriors beautiful presents, and to all several small presents, and then they asked that horses be furnished them upon which to pack their goods, and so enable them to go on their way to the Everywhere-Salt-Water, agreeing to pay well for all the horses that they bought. My brother answered that he and his men would furnish the horses needed, and the council came to an end.

There were here, at the end of our boat trail, only a few of my people, and they had not with them enough horses with which to pack all our goods to the camp on the other side of the pass. On the following day, therefore, Red Hair and some of the men started out for the camp with my brother and his people, taking what horses had been bought, and Long Knife and the rest of the men remained at the river, to wait there until they could be provided with horses. My man and I went with Red Hair's and my brother's party. And I rode: Red Hair, kind, generous man that he ever was, had given my man goods with which to buy a horse for me! We were nearly three days in making the camp, which was on the west slope of the

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great mountains. But those days were not long to me. I knew every part of the trail, and every place along it that we passed brought to me remembrance of some happening there in my young days. At last we arrived at the camp, and people old and people young came crowding around me, to tell me how glad they were to see me after the many winters that had passed since I had been taken from them.

Among them there came an old man, crying loudly: "Make way for me! Make way! Where is that woman, that Grass Woman? Show her to me; she is mine; her father gave her to me long before she was carried off by the enemy war party!"

"Here I am," I told him, "but I am not your woman! See, there he is, my man, and this little one here on my back is our son!"

The old man was nearly blind; he felt his way toward me with his staff, put his hands upon me, and tried to see my face, and felt of the roundness of the child: "It is true! She has a child!" he said. "Well, what if you have? You still belong to me! But I do not want you now. Give me tobacco and I will let you go. Yes, give me tobacco and you can do as you please with yourself."

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I told my man what he had said, and the old man got a piece of tobacco and went stumbling away with it, saying over and over to himself: "Women! Of what use are women to me? Tobacco! Ha! Tobacco is what makes happiness!"

I now had no idle time. When I was not interpreting for Red Hair, I was talking with my people, telling them all about the Earth House tribes, and how they lived, how well fed they were, and how comfortable their lodges. Most of all were they interested in what I told them about the game that we had seen at the falls of the Big-River-of-the-Plains. My brother, especially, became greatly excited about that: "There they are, thousands and thousands of buffalo, only a few days' journey away, and here we are starving. Even though we die for it, we must go out there and kill buffalo!" he said. And all agreed with him that it was the one thing for them to do and do at once. Oh, how sorry I felt for them, my people, my own people! They were starving; there was n't enough meat in all that camp to make a meal for a dog. And to me, after my long, fat living in the Minnetaree village and upon the long trail up from it, their few handfuls of

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roots that they found each day were very mean and pitiful.

I now got my brother and others to tell Red Hair all that they knew about the country to the west and the trails in it. But none of them had been very far to the west, and so could tell him only what they had heard, and that was very little. It was Red Hair's plan to go down the little stream from where we were camped, to where it joined the river which, far off, ran into the real Big River, and there build boats in which to make our way to the Everywhere-Salt-Water. An old man told him that he had been down that river for some distance, and that, as far as he had gone, it had been too rough for boats. My brother and others told him that the one way to get to the Big River, where boats could be used, would be to go north to the Nez Percés' trail to the buffalo plains and follow it west to Big River; that when they struck it, in the Nez Percés' country, they could then build boats or buy them from boat tribes just west of the Nez Percés, and travel in them down the river to the Great Water. Red Hair considered what he had been told and answered that he must see for himself if the near Big River was too rough for

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boats. So, engaging the old man to show him the way, he set out down the creek with his men on the following day. On the next day following, my brother, my man, and I, and many of the people set out to take horses to Long Knife and bring him and his men and goods over across the mountains to this camp of my people. When we arrived at Long Knife's camp he bought all the horses that they could spare, but they were not enough with which to make the start, so we waited for another party of my people to come with more horses. They arrived on the next day, and sold all the animals that they could let go, but still we had not enough; so, when we did make the start west, after sinking our stone-loaded boats deep in the water, what goods the horses could not carry were carried by some of the women. We got a late start and made an early camp.

On the following day, after breaking camp, I rode up beside my brother and asked him why, early that morning, he had sent two young men on ahead of us.

"I have sent them on to tell the people to break camp and come east," he answered. "We are all starving. As soon as we meet them we shall all

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band together and strike out for the buffalo plains. We have now some black sand and some balls for our guns, given us by one and another of your chiefs' men; so, even if we do meet a war party of the enemy, we shall manage to kill a few buffalo and bring the meat back here in the mountains."

Now, when my brother told me that, I just went sick with shame for him! He had promised Red Hair and Long Knife to furnish all the horses needed to take them and their goods to the west side camp, where they could buy all the horses that they wanted, horses that they must have to enable them to go on westward, and here he was planning to gather his people and turn back with them to go down to hunt buffalo! I was so angry at him that I could not speak, and then it came to me that I was not the one to reproach him. Only too well I knew that men seldom pay any attention to women's advice. The one thing for me to do was to tell Long Knife what was happening and let him scold my brother.

"Yes, with the black sand and balls that we now have for our guns, we can risk going out after buffalo," my brother went on, a happy smile on the face that he turned to me. "Myself, I have all

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of thirty swallows of black sand and balls. Your man is generous; he gave them to me."

At that I became still more angry. My chiefs had strictly warned the men not to give nor sell a single load of powder and ball to the Indians, and my man, my own man, was one of those who had disobeyed the order! I said to myself that here, right here, our trail-making would end, for, without the horses that we needed, we could not possibly make our way onward toward the Everywhere-Salt-Water. Almost then I let loose at my brother the anger that was within me. And then I said to myself: "No. I cannot scold him! What had his people to eat this morning? Most of them a few roots; some of them not a mouthful of anything! Were I in his place I should think as he does, that food for his starving people is of more importance than the wants of a few white men! But this must be: As the people have starved, so must they starve a few days longer. My white chiefs have got to have the horses that they need!"

I dropped back beside my man, who was leading one of the pack-horses, and told him what my brother had done, but I did not tell him that I knew that he and others of the men had given

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powder and balls to my people. What was done was done. I should never tell my chiefs about it; we already had enough troubles!

My man did nothing but say bad words when I had told him what was happening. He called my brother all the bad names he could think of. And then he turned upon me: "And so you think that, if your brother carries out his intention, we shall turn back!" he cried. "You should know better by this time these two white chiefs you love so much. Nothing will stop them! If they can't get horses they will still go on, forcing us along with them, and I shall have to go afoot, on and on until, somewhere there in the west, I fall and die!"

"And by your fault and serve you right! You would give away your powder and balls!" I almost told him, but stopped my tongue just in time, and said: "I still have faith in my white chiefs to do all things. You must hurry on and tell Long Knife what my brother has done."

It was some time, though, not until a midday rest was ordered, that we caught up with Long Knife. As soon as my man had told him what my brother had done, he called a council, and, of course, I had to do the interpreting. Do you

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think that it was pleasant for me, turning into the language of my people his scolding of my brother? He did scold him! He told him that he was a man of two tongues, and terribly shamed him there before all the people! I could not tell my brother all that he said; I had not the heart to do it. In the worst parts I put in some half-pleasant words of my own, and made my poor brother tell Long Knife that he was sorry for what he had done; that, so anxious was he to get his people started out for food, he had not remembered his promise; and that he would at once send a messenger on to tell the people at the west side camps to remain where they were until we arrived.

And so that trouble was wiped out!

When we arrived at the camp of my people, at the west end of the pass, we learned that another camp of them, gathered from different fishing places, was not far below, and that Red Hair and his men were there. They soon joined us, and we then learned that Red Hair had been down the river a long way and had found it too rough for boats. An old man, named Diving Eagle, had been Red Hair's guide. He was a member of a tribe of our nation that lived somewhere far to the

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west, and, with his family, had traveled to many far places and visited many tribes. He now said that the one thing for us to do would be to go north to the trail of the Nez Percés to the buffalo plains, and then follow it west until we arrived at a place where we could build boats in which to travel the rest of the way to the Everywhere-Salt-Water. Red Hair and Long Knife decided that we should do this, and we prepared to go on. All the horses were bought that my people could spare, but still we had not all that we wanted. The Blackfeet and the Minnetarees had stolen the most of their horses. The last two that we got were bought at a very high price, a gun, a pistol, and much food for them, and even at that the owners did not like to let them go.

Although he had said nothing to me about it, my brother had counted upon my man and me parting from Red Hair and Long Knife and turning back with him to the buffalo plains.

I was surprised when he now said to me: "Tomorrow your white men go upon their way; I have by my waiting upon them too long delayed taking my hungry people out to meat. You had better get your things out from the white men's camp

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this evening, so that we can make an early start in the morning."

"What do you mean?" I asked him. "I have had no thought of turning back with you. What made you think that I should?"

"I talked with your man about it. He does n't understand signs very well, but I understood him to say that you and he would leave the white men and join us," he answered.

My man was right there with us, and I asked him about it, what he had said to my brother.

"I told him that I did n't want to go any farther west," he replied. "Nor do I. I have gone far enough with these white men. I have slaved enough for them. It is best that we leave them right here!"

"We cannot do it. You promised them that we should go with them to the Everywhere-Salt-Water and back to the Minnetaree village. You put your name to that promise, and what was written cannot be rubbed out!" I said.

"There is a way out of it, a good way," he told me. "You can become sick, very sick, too sick to go on with them, and then, of course, I shall have to leave the party and take care of you!"

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"I shall not be sick! I am strong to go on!" I said.

"Well, if you don't care for yourself and for me, you ought to care for our little son," he pleaded. "We are almost starving now, and from all that I can learn, to the west there is no food at all after the fish turn about and go down the rivers. If we go on, we go to die from starvation!"

"Then we die with Red Hair and Long Knife, with good company!" I answered. "But we shall not do that. To the west are many tribes of people, and where they find food we can find it."

"Some of those tribes are very powerful. If we escape starvation, we shall be killed for the goods that we take with us," he said.

"You know as well as I do that Red Hair and Long Knife are great chiefs; that they have powerful medicine; that their men are also very brave. Enemy tribes cannot stop them from doing what they have set out to do!" I answered.

And at that my man sprang up, and, without another word to me, went off to the other camp.

I then explained to my brother why we could not leave the white men, and asked him to take good care of my adopted son until I could return

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and care for him myself. He promised to do that; said that he had taken the best of care for him since his mother's death. And so we parted. I felt very sad as I walked back to our camp. I thought of the terrible risk my people were about to take in going out after buffalo. And, although I had talked bravely enough about it, I, too, feared the long trail that we were about to follow into the west.

XI

TO THE EVERYWHERE-SALT-WATER

WE broke camp early the next morning, my people striking out to the east, we to the west and north. Old Diving Eagle, his sons, and a young man going with a message to the Flat-heads, accompanied us. Owing to our lack of horses, the most of our men were still on foot. Almost at once our troubles began. For five days we traveled up and down and up and down in very steep, high mountains, in rain and snow, and then, on the fifth day, we had some good luck. On that afternoon we came upon a large camp of Flat-heads, on their way to go out upon the plains with my people, and bought some horses from them. They were at first so afraid of us, never having seen any white men, that the women all ran off and the men stood trembling, not knowing what to do until they saw that we meant them no harm. They then became very friendly, and held a long council with Red Hair and Long Knife, and told all that they knew about the country and the tribes

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along the trail which we sought. I made their hearts glad when I told them that, in the vicinity of the falls of the Big-River-of-the-Plains, the country was black with buffalo, and that we had seen no enemies anywhere along that river.

After leaving the Flatheads, the old man, Diving Eagle, and one of his sons going on with us, we soon got into the roughest, most barren-of-game country that any of us had ever seen. After some days of it, so great was our hunger that we began killing our horses for food. Then we lost the trail in the new-falling snow, and Red Hair took some of the men and went on ahead to try to find a way on through the great mountains that broke sharp up into the blue in all directions as far as we could see. We suffered from cold, from wet, from hunger, for we killed our horses very sparingly. We began to despair: we thought that there would be no end to the mountains, that we should soon have to kill the last of our horses, and then, of course, we should die.

At last, after many days of hard travel and suffering, we rode down into warmer country and met some of Red Hair's men bringing food to us and good news. We had no more mountains to cross;

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a large camp of Nez Percés was near by, and we could obtain food from them. We made the camp that night, and there found Red Hair and his men. The Nez Percés, we found, were in many bands scattered over a great plains country and along its rivers. They had many horses and boats as well, and in every lodge were great quantities of dried salmon and dried camas and other roots. We bought all that we wanted of this food, ate plenty of it, and soon after eating nearly all of our party became sick. However, sick as the men were and my white chiefs, too, we moved camp down the river to where it was joined by another river and began building boats. Four very large logs and one not so large were cut, and fires were built upon them to burn out their insides. While this was going on, day after day, Red Hair and Long Knife kept me busy interpreting for them, and that was not easy, for only two or three of the Nez Percés understood a little of my language, and they were all very poor sign-talkers. The most important news that we got from them was, that, although there were some rapids ahead, we could boat down this river into the truly Big-River-of-the-West-Side, and down that to its great falls. White men

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had been seen at the falls, which were not a very great distance from the Everywhere-Salt-Water.

When the boats were finished, we loaded our goods into them, left our horses with the Nez Percés, and went on. On our second night down the river, Diving Eagle had a terrible dream. He told me about it while we were eating our morning meal, and asked me if I did not think it was a warning to him to turn back to our people. I answered that the snow in the mountains would prevent him going to them, and he said no more. But soon after we had set out, he and his son got out of the boat in which they were traveling, and started up the shore as fast as they could run, and we saw no more of them. I cried a little over his going. He had been good company to me, with his evening tales about my people. And now all the interpreting and questioning of the different tribes that we should meet, fell upon me. I prayed the gods to give me the wisdom to do it all. We had with us two Nez Percé chiefs, both of whom understood a little of my language, and through them I hoped to be able to do all that my white chiefs asked of me.

This was not a gentle river; we had much trouble in its rapids. After some days we arrived at the

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place where it entered the real Big River, and then, for a time, had better water. Then we came to the beginning of terrible rapids and falls along it, and twice had to drag the boats around bad places. All this time on the lesser river we were meeting different tribes of the Nez Percés. At the falls of the Big River we came upon the first of other tribes, people who lived in houses and went about in boats. As we of the mountains fearlessly traveled along great cliffs and across steep slides upon our horses, so did they travel in their boats water so bad that it did not seem possible that they could survive its terrible waves and swirlings. Time was when I should have thought that the people of these different tribes were very rich. They had great quantities of dried salmon, salmon pemmican, and dried roots. I once had loved this food. I now despised it. And I saw how very poor these people were. The only rich people are those of the plains: the Earth House people, the Blackfeet, the Crows. With their great bands of horses they wander here and there over their endless plains, and wherever they go there is their food, real food upon all sides of them, — buffalo, antelope, elk, deer, — all easily to be killed as wanted.

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After passing the last swift water of this Big River we found it to become ever wider the farther we went. Truly, as a mountain stream is to the Big-River-of-the-Plains, so is that river to this Big-River-of-the-West, just a little creek and nothing more. Why, at last this river became so wide that, looking across it on a clear day, one could not possibly see a man on the farther shore! And now strange things began to happen. Twice, between sunrise and sunrise, the current of this great river turned and ran back, and the rising, backing water tasted of salt. Red Hair told me that this was because the Everywhere-Salt-Water was close at hand, and was pushing back the river water, but I could not understand that. Why should the Great Salt Water want to fight the river water, I should like to know? We had no sooner set out one morning, I sitting in the bow of my boat, than a terribly fierce appearing water animal thrust its head and part of its body out of the water, so close that I could have put my hand upon it, opened wide its mouth and roared at me, made a splash that threw water all over me, and then disappeared as suddenly as it came. It was a water-dog! A fish-dog! Yes, it had the head and body of a dog, but

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much larger, and it had fishlike fins where its front legs should have been, and its body ended in a fishlike tail. Yes, and the noise that it made was much like the barking of a dog. Red Hair told me not to be afraid of it; that it and its kind did not harm people; but I could not help being afraid of it. I thought what would happen to my little son and me if we were to be upset: without doubt these animals would at once seize us and drag us down into the deep water and eat us!

We had now come into a different country; a country of much rain and fog, and that, too, Red Hair told me, was caused by the Everywhere-Salt-Water. We were boating on one morning, when, suddenly, Red Hair and Long Knife and all the men began to cry out with joy and point ahead, and, as I wondered what it was all about, Red Hair signed to me: "There it is, the Everywhere-Salt-Water!"

I looked and looked for it, but could see nothing, nothing but the wide river running on and on ahead of us to where it was hidden in dark fog, from which came a roaring noise. I was soon to know what that roaring was. We made camp, and such waves as I had never thought there could be

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came roaring and pouring upon us, wetting us and all our goods, and tossing drift trees and wood all around us. That was the beginning of some terrible days of rain, strong wind, high waves, and of hunger. We were on the north side of the river. Some of the men went on ahead, in boats, on foot, looking for a good place for us to camp, but could find none that would do. We then, on a still day, crossed the river, and more parties went out, and at last a good place was found. It was on a little river, some distance back from the salty Big River. There, on a little hill, in good pine woods, the men built a fort and we wintered in it. There Indians from different tribes came to visit us and sell us their bad food, fish, and roots. Also they brought women to lend to our men. Red Hair and Long Knife would have nothing to do with these women, and that often made them angry.

There were quite a number of elk and deer around our fort, and the men often brought in some of them. They were poor in flesh, but better than no meat. The best food that we had was the meat of the dogs that we bought of the Indians. We soon used the last of our salt, and several men were sent to the shore of the Everywhere-

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Salt-Water to boil this water and make salt. Not long after they had gone, one of them returned with some salt, and told about a great fish that the Indians had found on the shore of the Everywhere-Salt-Water. I could hardly believe that there was ever so large a fish as this one they described, but, whatever its size, I wanted to see it, and see, too, the Great Water that the men were always talking about. Red Hair and several of the men were to go after some of the fat of the big fish, and I told him that I wanted to go, too, as my man was to be one of the party, and he said that I could go. I was glad. I was tired of sitting day after day in the fort.

We traveled for three days in bad, low country, and over a high mountain on our way to the big fish. We struck the Everywhere-Salt-Water on the second day, and, great though I had expected to find it, still was I astonished at the size of it. In whatever direction I looked out upon it, I saw that it had no farther shore; that it went on and on to the edge of the world. There was no wind, but still was that great water angry, breaking in roaring waves higher than a fort upon the sand and rocks of the shore! From the top of the high moun-

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tain at its edge we could see still farther out upon it, but still could see no farther shore. But we did see the Big-River-of-the-West running into it, and several villages of the Indians that were built along its shores. That night I could not sleep because of the roaring of the waves, which, day and night, are ever rushing upon the shore.

At last, on the third day, we came to the big fish, or what was left of it, just its skeleton; the Indians had taken all its meat and most of its intestines. At first I could not believe that those bones were bones and the bones of a fish. Why, the backbone was larger around than my body, and the rib bones curving up around from it were so high that a man could not touch the tips of them with the muzzle of his upheld gun! In between those ribs, where the stomach had been, we could have piled all the boats in which we had come down Big River from the Nez Percés' country, and even then there might have been space for one or two more! As the sun looks down upon me, I tell you in his sight that, truly, that was the size of the skeleton of the big fish! I did not go very close to it. I was afraid of it. Its ghost was thereabouts, of course, and I prayed hard that it would do me and mine no

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harm. Red Hair explained to me how the great fish came to be there. He said that it had, no doubt, been chasing smaller fish, to eat, and that it had got into shallow shore water and the waves had pushed it out upon the shore where, lacking water, it soon died. After he told me that I feared the waves more than ever.

There were two villages where the big fish had been wave-pushed ashore to die, and the Indians living in them, and Indians from other villages, had taken all its meat and fat. I saw much of it. I saw with my own eyes pieces of its fat that were as thick as the body of a buffalo! Red Hair bought some of it, and some of the oil that the Indians had made from it, and he and his men said that it was good food. Myself, I did not even touch it. I believed it to be bad medicine; all I asked was that the ghost of the big fish would do me and mine no harm. It hurt me, though, to refuse to eat it when Red Hair asked me to join in the feast. I thought so much of him that I wanted always to do what he asked of me. But this was too much. I was glad when I saw that he was not angry because I refused to eat the fat. I thought over things he had done for me and I for him. He had saved my son

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and me from the flood at the falls of the Big-River-of-the-Plains. He had bought a horse from my people for me to ride. He had brought me here to see the Everywhere-Salt-Water and this big fish's bones. I had given him my bead belt, with which to buy an otter-skin robe that he wanted, and, when he fell sick, I had given him a piece of bread that I had long been saving for my little son. Best of all, I had saved him — and all the party — from terrible trouble with my Snake people. But I had not done enough for him. I prayed the gods that night to show me how to do more for him, great chief that he was.

We had no real winter, no deep snow, where we were, near the Everywhere-Salt-Water. Instead of snow we had rain; almost continuous rain. It was in the middle of our stay there that we went to see the big fish. After that game became more and more scarce, and we often went hungry to bed. The men, too, became weak and often sick. We longed more and more for Red Hair and Big Knife to give the word for us to abandon the fort and take our back trail, but they kept saying that we must wait a little longer, so as not to strike the great mountains until the summer sun had melted the

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deep snow upon them enough to let us through the pass. However, hunger at last drove us from the fort. We loaded our boats and set out upon the long trail that we had made the previous summer.

As we went on up the Great River we found that all the people along it — there were many different tribes of them — were as hungry as we were. We did get a few dogs from them and now and then a few roots. I ate as little as I possibly could get along with, so that there would be more for the men. We had no real trouble until, after some days of traveling in the rain and cold, we arrived at the foot of the bad water and falls of the Great River.

We there lost one of our big boats, and had trouble with one of the several tribes that make their home at the falls. The men of this tribe tried to steal several of our things, to hinder us in every way they could, and no doubt would have attacked us had we not kept constant watch upon them. After leaving these bad people, we obtained from another tribe a few horses, and more from still another tribe, until, at last, we had about twenty head. We then abandoned our boats and set out overland, and soon came to a camp of a

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tribe of Flatheads, who were as mean to us as the tribe at the falls had been. We made camp near their village, and they tried to steal things from us. On the next day, as we were passing through the village, the pack on the horse which my man was leading came off, and an Indian ran off with a robe which he stole from it. That made Long Knife very angry. "We have got to stop this thieving right now, else we shall never get through the country," he said. "Yes, we shall make a stand and kill some of these people unless they give up the robe!" And then he ordered my man to tell me to ride on as fast as I could and tell Red Hair and his men to come back and help him fight the camp.

I was on a fat and very eager little horse and I started him off up the trail at a swift lope. As I left the village there was great outcry in it, women running with their children to hide, and men calling to one another as they rushed about after their weapons and prepared to make a stand against Long Knife. Off to my left I saw a man mount his horse and take after me, and well I knew that, if he succeeded in catching me, in killing me, Long Knife and his men would be killed there in the vil-

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lage, and then, later on, Red Hair and his men would be wiped out. I had the lead of the Flathead, but I saw at once that his horse was more powerful, more swift than mine; from the very start he gained upon me. My little son, upon my back, prevented me from whipping my horse to faster speed, for with one hand I had to clutch hard the edges of the robe by which I held him to me, and with the other hold the bridle rope; all that I could do was to thump and keep thumping my heels against the sides of the animal!

I did not know how far ahead of me Red Hair and his men were. The trail was through groves of timber and across hilly small prairies. I rode through two groves, across two prairies, and as I entered the third grove, the Flathead was so close behind me that I could hear him whipping his horse. "I am gone," I said to myself, "but I will keep on going to the very end!"

That grove of pines was not wide. I tore on through it, out upon a prairie and up a rise in it, and, topping it, there I saw Red Hair and his men not far ahead! I cried out to them. They heard me and saw me and came hurrying to meet me. I looked back, and looked just in time to see the

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Flathead come to the top of the little rise and turn and at once ride back out of sight! Then, as I met Red Hair, I signed to him, "Come! Long Knife calls you! We are to fight!"

"Yes!" he signed back to me. And away we went toward the village. We topped the little rise and I looked for my pursuer, but could see nothing of him. On we went. I expected at every jump of my horse to hear the guns of Long Knife and his men as they fought for their lives, and feared that we should not be in time to save them. And then, oh, how glad I was when we at last rode into sight of the village and saw them gathered at the edge of the lodges. One of the men had found the robe where the thief had hidden it, and, after all, the Indians had not dared fight for it. As soon as we came up to them, Long Knife gave the warriors a terrible scolding, told them that we should do some killing if they ever again attempted to steal from us, and then we went our way.

The next people we came to were the Wallawallas, who had been friendly to us the summer before, and were friendly to us now. We got from them a few more horses, and had many talks with them through a captive they had, a young man belong-

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ing to a far western tribe of my nation. I had never met one of that tribe before. His language was somewhat different from mine, but not so much that we could not well understand one another. My chiefs, through me, had many talks with him, and got from him much that we had not known about the country and the different tribes that lived in it. I told him that he could now be free; that my chiefs would take him with us to my tribe of our nation. But he answered that he no longer wished to return to his people. He was in love with a Wallawalla girl and hoped soon to have her. He spoke the Wallawalla language very well, and so, through the both of us, my chiefs had also many talks with the Wallawalla chiefs, and became greater friends than ever with them.

We got more horses from the Wallawallas, and went on to our best friends of the west side, the Nez Percés. They had taken good care of our horses that we had left with them the summer before, and soon collected them and turned them over to us. Red Hair and Long Knife were for packing up and going on at once, but the Nez Percés told them that we should not be able to cross the mountains for a long time to come, nearly two moons.

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So we remained there in the low country, visiting one and another of the villages of the Indians, and hunting, and starving mostly, for food was very scarce. We had a lot of sickness in our camp. My own little son fell sick, too, and for a time I thought that he would die. Many of the Indians were also sick; one, especially, a chief who had not been able to move for a summer and a winter. Red Hair and Long Knife doctored him and made him well, as they did all the others who came to them, and that made the people like us better than ever. Some of the young women were very beautiful, so it is no wonder that our men liked them. They would go to the village to be with them as often as they could be spared from our camp. There was one young woman, tall, slender, long-haired, who fell in love with Red Hair, and followed him wherever he went and loved him more and more every day. When we at last started on, she begged him to take her with us, and when Red Hair told her that he could not possibly do that, she went off into the woods and hung herself from a limb of a tree. Her people discovered her just in time to save her life, and said that they would keep close watch upon her until she recovered from her grief.

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We left the low country and got up into the mountains, only to find that the snow was still too deep for us to cross them. We had to turn back and remain for a time longer with the Nez Percés. Finally, we made a second start, with a couple of Nez Percés to guide us, and had no trouble in crossing the Bitter Root Mountains and ascending the river in my Snake people's country that we had named after Red Hair. There the Nez Percé guides left us, and I became the guide. And then each day, oh, how eagerly I looked ahead for sight of my people. On we went, on up the west side of the range, through the pass, and down to the place where, the summer before, we had met my brother and sunk our boats, and not until we arrived there did I despair. I had been unable to find even old signs of my people. I feared that, after we had left them the summer before, they had all been killed by the Blackfeet or the Minnetarees when they went out upon the plains to hunt. I was very sad-feeling for days, as we went on and on and still found no signs of them. There should, at least, have been early spring signs of them at the Forks of Big River. There I went carefully over the ground and found not one old fireplace that had been made

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since the previous summer. I did not learn until two summers later, when a war party of Minnetarees returned from a raid, that I was mistaken; the party had found my people encamped at the foot of the mountains, just south of Big River, and had killed six of them and taken many of their horses.

Well, we raised our canoes from the deep water, opened a cache of goods that we had made near them, and went on down to the Three Forks of the river. There our party separated, Long Knife and some of the men going north to Bear River, to follow it down to its mouth, where they would meet others of the men who were to take the boats downriver. The rest of the men, under Red Hair, were to go south to the Yellowstone and follow it to its mouth. My man and I went with Red Hair, I to be his guide to the Yellowstone. Well I knew the trail to it, for in my young girl days I had followed it many times with my people.

We were not long in traveling across to the Yellowstone and to buffalo. Again we were in the midst of countless herds of them; again, after many moons, we ate at every meal all the fat meat that we wanted, and went to sleep at night with no fear

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that we might starve on the morrow. I said to myself that never again, unless Red Hair asked me to, would I go into that far west country of little game, few fish, and few roots! I pitied the tribes that lived there, — yes, even those who had been mean to us.

After striking the Yellowstone, we went on down it to good timber, and there built two boats in which to continue our way, some of us, while a few of the men followed us overland with the horses. Just as the boats were completed a few of the horses were stolen in the night by the Crows. At that, Red Hair cautioned the herders to look well after those that remained to us, and we got into the boats and parted from them. We had no trouble in going down to the mouth of the river, and there the herders overtook us in hide boats: after we left them the Crows had stolen all of the remaining horses and had got away with them unseen. And now, a little way below the mouth of the Yellowstone, Long Knife and his men also overtook us, and, again a united party, we went on down Big River, and a few days later, after passing two white men, free trappers, we sighted the Minnetaree villages. Hunters from them had

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seen us and spread the news of our coming, and there was a great crowd to meet and greet us when we landed at the little village of the Black Moccasins, at the mouth of Knife River.

With the crowd was Otter Woman, thin, gray-faced, so old-appearing that I hardly knew her. She threw herself upon me and wept, crying out to me: "Oh, Grass Woman! Pity me! Comfort me! I have lost my little son! He fell sick one night and died before the rising of the sun!"

I did comfort her all that I could by telling her about meeting our people in the previous summer. But when she learned that I had seen not even signs of them on our way back, she became very sad again. She soon died of the coughing disease; of that, and mourning for her little son.

Now, after my chiefs had met the chiefs of the Earth House people in a great council, they asked my man and me to go down-river with them and visit the great chief of the Long Knives. My man answered that we should go with them, and that made me very happy. Wherever Red Hair went, I was more than glad to go. I began at once to beg pretty and useful things from my friends, so that I should have many presents to give the great white

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chief when we arrived in his village. But that very evening my man had a talk with some Nor'westers, who had come from the Assiniboine River fort to trade, and the next morning he told me, and then Red Hair and Long Knife, that we should not go down-river. Here, in the buffalo country, where he had lived so long, was the place for him, he said.

"But you can go as interpreter for the chiefs that we are taking with us," they told him. "You shall be paid for going, and some of our men shall bring you all back to this place."

"No, I feel that I can't go, that this is the one place for me," my man answered again.

And that ended it. Oh, but I was angry at him! But what could I do? Nothing! Women can never do anything that they want to do, because of their men! The truth was, the Nor'westers had talked him out of going with Red Hair and Long Knife! And so, with but little delay, my good chiefs and their men got into their boats and set out for their far-away country. I watched them until they went out of sight around the bend of the river, and then I went off by myself and cried.

So ends my story.

XII

THE REST OF HER STORY

IN beginning this story of the life of Sacajawea, as I had it from my old friends of the buffalo days, I intended to incorporate in it several tales that Crow Woman was wont to tell about various happenings in Fort Mandan, and in the Mandan villages in the winter of 1804-05. But as these tales had to do with the gay adventures of the Long Knives, in which Sacajawea had no part, except, occasionally, as interpreter, I have concluded that this is not the place for them. Nor shall I set forth what the old Gros Ventre Black Horn had to say regarding the killing of two of his tribe by Captain Lewis on his side exploration of the Marias River country, except that, as he had always heard, the Hudson's Bay Company was responsible for it. The factor of the company had advised the Blackfeet and the Gros Ventres to kill all the white men that they found in their Missouri River country, for, if they failed to do so, it would soon become overrun by trappers and despoiled of all its

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beavers and other fur animals. Hugh Monroe's — Rising Wolf's — story bears witness to the truthfulness of the old Gros Ventre's statement. His factor, Terrible Tongue, must have been a terrible man!

In telling me what they knew about Sacajawea, as we still must call her, my old friends all declared that they believed her dead. She was, however, as I now know, very much alive at that time, and for several years thereafter. Mrs. Kipp and Crow Woman both said that she did see her much-loved chief, Red Hair, again, for he invited her and her son and man to visit him, and one fall they all went down-river in the trade boats, and lived for several winters with Red Hair, in Red Hair's town, as the Mandans and other tribes called St. Louis. Crow Woman stated that they returned to the country before she was captured by the Crows. Mrs. Kipp said that she well remembered Sublette engaging her, and her man and son with her, to go with him as interpreter on a trading expedition overland to her Snake people in the Rocky Mountains, and that, after several such trips, the family finally went upon one from which they never returned to the villages of the Earth House people.

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As I did not attend the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, nor the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland in 1905, I did not learn, until several months ago, that there had been of recent years a wide awakening of interest in the story and the fate of Sacajawea, who, for something like forty years, had been to me an American heroine compared to whom Pocahontas, of Virginia fame, was a mere shadow. The latter, so the story runs, saved the life of a white man who had been captured by her tribe and for a few winter months kept a small settlement of white people from being unpleasantly hungry. Sacajawea made it possible for Lewis and Clark to carry out their great undertaking, to blaze the trail which opened up to civilization the half of a continent. Without her unfailing help the brave leaders and their men would have miserably perished in the Rockies, or, surviving the attack of the Snake and the Flathead tribes, they would have been obliged to turn about right there and go back whence they had come!

The manner in which I learned of the wide interest that is being taken in Sacajawea was very strange. There came to me, here in Los Angeles, from my Blackfeet people in Montana, an old-

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time war suit, — bonnet, shirt, leggins, moccasins, and all, — and one of its wrappings was a tattered country newspaper in which I read that the Montana Legislature had appropriated ten thousand dollars for two statues of Sacajawea, one to be placed at Great Falls, and the other at the Three Forks of the Missouri, the article ending by giving a brief and very inaccurate account of the life of the heroine. I knew at once that it was not chance that had put that old newspaper in my hand; my medicine — ni-tá-tos-im, my sun power — had taken that way to advise me to tell all that I know about our great heroine of the West. But I knew her story only to the time she had left the Missouri River country. What of her later life? I began to make inquiries, and learned from the Reverend J. Roberts, Superintendent of the Shoshone Indian Mission, Wind River, Wyoming, that he had himself buried Sacajawea at that place on April 9, 1884.

For further information regarding Sacajawea, Mr. Roberts referred me to Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, Librarian of the University of Wyoming, and a member of the Wyoming Bar. Dr. Hebard very kindly, in answer to my inquiry, sent me a

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copy of the "Journal of American History" for September, 1907, containing her excellent story of the later life of Sacajawea, and gave me permission to make what use of it I would. That I make generous use of it the following paragraphs attest:—

PILOT OF FIRST WHITE MEN TO CROSS THE AMERICAN CONTINENT

Identification of the Indian Girl who led the Lewis and Clark Expedition over the Rocky Mountains in their Unparalleled Journey into the Mysteries of the Western World — Recognition of Sacajawea as the Woman who Guided the Explorers to the New Golden Empire

BY GRACE RAYMOND HEBARD, PH.D.

The most hazardous and the most significant journey ever made on the Western Continent, a journey that rivals in daring and exceeds in importance the expeditions of Stanley and Livingstone in the wilds of Africa — a journey . . . that gave to the world riches beyond comprehension — was piloted by a woman.

It was an epoch-making journey; a journey that moved the world along; that pushed the boundary of the United States from the Mississippi River to the Pacific; that gave us the breadth of the hemisphere from ocean to ocean; the command of its rivers and harbors; the wealth of its mountains and plains and valleys — a dominion vast and rich enough for the ambition of kings. . . .

In honor of this Indian girl, Sacajawea, the only woman

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who accompanied the Lewis and Clark Expedition into the Northwest a hundred years ago, memorials are being erected. A bill was introduced in the Wyoming Legislature in February, 1907, carrying with it an appropriation of five hundred dollars for the erection of a monument to mark the last resting-place of this woman pilot, the amount asked for purposely corresponding to the amount given Charboneau by Lewis and Clark, at Mandan, in 1806. The Legislature of North Dakota has recently (1907) appropriated the sum of fifteen thousand dollars for a foundation and pedestal for a Sacajawean statue to be made by Mr. Leonard Crunelle. This is to be erected at Bismarck. . . . When the Wyoming measure was presented for passage, it was developed that one member of the Legislature had not only known the children of Sacajawea, but also their mother.

The grave of Sacajawea has recently been found and her identity is established by newly discovered evidence herein recorded.

To have one's deeds extolled after a century has passed, when they were hardly recognized when executed, has been the common fate particularly of that class of individuals known as explorers; for the service rendered must be subjected to the test of time and the benefits derived as a result of the exploration must be carefully weighed before applause may be adequately given.

The only woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark across the Continent to the Pacific Coast during the seasons of 1804-06 did not in her lifetime receive any personal recognition of the services she rendered these explorers during their unparalleled journey to the then unknown great Northwest. But the century that has passed since that event has brought a keen appreciation of her services from those who have taken the interest to unravel and ex-

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amine records of her deeds as a genius of a guide. . . . The story of the part that Sacajawea played in this continental expedition is as fascinating as a piece of knighthood fiction; that it is history also adds to its charm.

Wyoming was not traversed by these explorers either on the journey to the coast or on the return, yet it claims the distinction of having had this Indian woman guide a resident within its borders for many years and holds now all that is mortal of her remains. The facts leading to the establishment beyond doubt of the identity of the Wyoming woman with that of the woman guide are presented now for the first time. This statement of identity has been met with ridicule, doubt, suspicion, denial. Ridicule has been turned to consideration; doubt to belief; suspicion to admission; denial to acceptance, for fact after fact has been presented and corroborated by those of unquestioned integrity.

Sacajawea's life has two periods: that about which we know; that about which nothing can be learned. It is this latter period that has been the stumbling-block, "the winter of our discontent." We see her in the vigor of her splendid young womanhood; she disappears as mysteriously as she appeared; when she again is visible it is as the aged Sacajawea, white-haired and well-preserved, whose fatal ailment could only be attributed to old age. . . .

The Lewis and Clark "Journal" speaks of the most ardent manner in which the feelings of the brother and sister were expressed, when, in the mountains, Sacajawea recognized in the Shoshone chief her long-lost brother. She threw her blanket over him and, with her head on his shoulder, "wept profusely." Here she learned that all of her family had died except two brothers, and a son of her eldest sister, "a small boy, who was immediately adopted by her." This last fact, insignificant as it may appear, proves a

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strong point in establishing Sacajawea's identity. There is no record to show what became of this boy after adoption, whether he went on with the party or whether on its return he went with his adopted mother to the Mandan villages. No record of him can be traced from that time until recent years when we find him living as the brother of Baptiste and son of Sacajawea, he being known as Bazil.

. . . Charboneau received from Lewis and Clark for his services the sum of five hundred dollars and a few odd cents. There is no record to show that Sacajawea received any compensation by gift or word. It is true we find the following in the "Journals": "This man [Charboneau] has been very serviceable to us, and his wife particularly useful among the Shoshones. Indeed, she has borne with a patience truly admirable the fatigues of so long a route encumbered with the charge of an infant, who is even now only nineteen months old. She was very observant. She had a good memory, remembering locations not seen since her childhood. In trouble she was full of resources, plucky and determined. With her helpless infant she rode with the men, guiding us unerringly through mountain passes and lonely places. Intelligent, cheerful, resourceful, tireless, faithful, she inspired us all."

The finding of letters written a hundred years ago shows that Sacajawea was more keenly appreciated than we had been led to believe. This evidence was first made public by an article in the "Century Magazine" (vol. LXVIII, page 876), containing a letter written by Clark on his voyage down the river after leaving the Mandan village, and dated August 20, 1806: —

"CHARBONO: —

"You have been for a long time with me and have conducted yourself in such a manner as to gain my friendship. Your woman who accompanied you that long dangerous

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and fatiguing rout to the Pacific Ocean and back deserved a greater reward for her attention and services on the rout than we had the power to give her at the Mandans."

No further attention was paid to this woman, not even in the accounts that have been published by those who made the journey, until the time of the St. Louis Fair, called the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, in 1904; and later at the Lewis and Clark Exposition, in 1905, at Portland, Oregon. Mrs. Eva Emily Dye attracted attention to this pilot of the West in her book, "The Conquest," in which she has extolled not unduly the devotion of the little woman to the cause of Lewis and Clark on their marvelous trip. Mr. Bruno Louis Zimm, the New York sculptor, in his preparation for the modeling of a statue of Sacajawea for the St. Louis Fair, spent a year in studying the literature and ethnology involved in this subject. When the time came for him to procure a model typical of the woman of the Shoshone tribe, he was instructed to correspond with the Reverend John Roberts, of the Shoshone Reservation in Wyoming, where he had preached and worked as a missionary for a quarter of a century. This reservation is located in the center of the State, having been the home of Indians for many generations. Mr. Roberts directed Mr. Zimm's attention to one of the young Shoshone women, Virginia Grant, who was at that time a student at the Carlisle Indian School. She is pronounced to be decidedly typical of this tribe.

In the correspondence incident to obtaining the desired information, Mr. Roberts, in a personal interview with the author of this article, imparted long-sought information which carries with it substantial evidence of its authenticity. After Mr. Roberts had been informed that the purpose of this photograph of Virginia Grant was to assist in modeling a statue of the woman who gave Lewis and Clark

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guidance across the mountains, it freshened his memory to the extent that he remembered burying a very old Indian woman during the first years in his field of labor in Wyoming. Upon examination of his parish records, which he had carefully kept since assuming his duties with the Shoshone Indians, he found this notation under date of 1884, April 9: "Bazil's mother, Shoshone, one hundred years, residence Shoshone Agency, cause of death, old age, place of burial, Burial Ground, Shoshone Agency." Mr. Roberts, on January 8, 1906, while attending the funeral of one of Chief Washakie's grandsons, heard a great wailing as is the Shoshone custom, for they mourn with a very great and sore lamentation, and observed one of Sacajawea's granddaughters standing over her grave "giving way to her grief in great wailing." This cemetery or burial ground is a forty-acre tract fenced in with a strong and lasting fence of cedar posts and twisted barbed wire on either side of the posts and twisted together between posts. Only a slight slab marks Sacajawea's grave. The proper marking of this grave should have immediate attention while he who buried her can identify the exact locality.

This woman was known in the Shoshone Valley as Sacajawea, and had two sons called Bazil and Baptiste, both of whom were personally known by Rev. Mr. Roberts. Old Indians now living testified to him that in her earlier life Sacajawea was "very nice-looking"; short of stature, spare of figure, very intelligent and quick in her movements. Rev. Mr. Roberts stated that Sacajawea in 1883 was wonderfully active and intelligent considering her great age. She walked alone and was bright to the last. She had no sickness, but was found dead one morning, April 9, 1884, on her shake-down of blankets and quilts in her teepee. In the afternoon of the same day she received

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Christian burial. This woman was illiterate, but spoke French as well as did her two sons.

Although Shoshones claim nephews as sons and will not admit any adoption, yet, for thirty-four years at least, there had been a rumor, amounting to a statement of fact, that Basil was not Sacajawea's son, but was a nephew and had been adopted. This is a crucial point in the case because it was a puzzling fact that this son Basil should be older than Baptiste, who was the child carried on the mother's back during the journey to the coast, Baptiste being then her only son, hence the oldest. We must refer again to the Lewis and Clark "Journal," to that single line — "a son of her eldest sister, a small boy, who was immediately adopted by her." Had the child been a baby, or "papoose," he would not have been a "small boy." These few words furnish convincing explanation why the *older* son was not the one Sacajawea took with her, and why there was a family tradition that Basil was adopted. Basil and Baptiste both told Mr. Roberts that Baptiste was the child that was carried to the coast. This isolated piece of evidence about the adoption and the child so adopted being older than her own child is not one generally remembered or noticed. As it appears in the "Journal" it has no significance and that child is never mentioned again so far as can be ascertained.

Again, the name of "Baptiste" has been a stumbling-block, because the little "papoose" was known in history for a century as "Little Toussaint," or "Toussaint Charboneau," and so that when we introduce into the romantic history an aged man with an entirely new and foreign name there is certainly a demand for an explanation and recognition of facts. If we will go back to the spring of 1805, Sunday, April 7, when Lewis and Clark engaged their additional men at the Mandan village, we find the name of

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Baptiste Lepage. This man was living at that time at the locality where Charboneau and Sacajawea made their home or headquarters. As they were friends and companions it is not unlikely or improbable that his first name was given the first child of the French-Canadian interpreter. There is no mention of this child's name in all of the journals and accounts that have been printed about the journey. But in going over the private papers of Captain Clark, the letter before mentioned contains more valuable information than that before cited. A portion reads as follows: —

“As to your little son (my boy Pomp) you well know my fondness for him and my anxiety to take him and raise him as my own child. I once more tell you if you will bring your son Baptiest, I will educate him etc. . . . with anxious expectations of seeing my little dancing boy Baptiest, I remain your friend,

“WILLIAM CLARK.”

This letter was written in 1806 and was never known to the public until 1904, yet for thirty-five years at the least prior to the latter date, Sacajawea's own son was known as “Baptiste.” Incredibility cannot attach to this point in the evidence, for the facts are substantiated by a hundred living witnesses as to the name by which the son had been called by his mother, for thirty or thirty-five years. Documentary evidence shows further that Captain Clark was true to his promise and had little Toussaint Charboneau and Sacajawea come to St. Louis, where the boy was placed in a Catholic school, the teaching being in French, the language of his father. We find in Captain Clark's account as Indian Commissioner, an office to which he was appointed by the President after his return from the West,

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items under date of 1820, covering expense for school books, shoes, and other things for a boy. This account appears in the name of Toussaint Charboneau, doubtless the interpreter rather than his son. His boy was born in 1805; hence was fifteen years old at this period of his education. Baptiste and Bazil, we must remember, spoke Shoshone, French, and English.

The descendants of Bazil scorn the idea of having any French blood in them and claim only the blue blood of the American Indian. There is strong evidence that they are right in their assertion. There is nothing to show that Sacajawea's sister ever saw a man other than an Indian. The descendants of Baptiste looked like mixed bloods and act as such, associating with whites more than Indians usually do. They have acted as guides in earlier days and as United States police later, intermixing with whites and Mexicans. A son of Baptiste told Mr. Roberts that his father often told him that his grandmother had carried his father (Baptiste) when a babe on her back at the time she showed the way to "The First Washington" across the Crow Indian country to the "Big Water toward the Setting Sun"; that Baptiste's father (Charboneau) died long ago near the site of the present White Rocks Ute Agency, Utah, and that he had a lot of papers that were burned at his funeral.

In addition to the above, Dr. Hebard gives much other equally convincing proof that the Sacajawea of Lewis and Clark, and the one of the Shoshone reservation, were the one and same person. As has been before stated, her own people did not call her by that name. In Shoshone her proper name was Bo-i'-naiv, Grass Woman, or,

Bird Woman

as Rev. Mr. Roberts translates it, Grass Maiden. Singularly enough, there is a compound Shoshone word, *sacajáw'e*, which, according to Mr. Roberts, means the boat, or raft launcher, that very closely resembles in sound the name that the Minnetarees gave her, *Tsa-ká-ka-wias*, Bird Woman. Says the Reverend C. L. Hall, of Elbowoods, North Dakota, for many years a missionary with the Mandans, Minnetarees, and Arickarees, in his "Gros Ventre Spelling of the Name, Bird Woman": "... So, for some reason or fancy, the Shoshone girl was called the Bird Woman. There is no doubt about this name or the spelling of it. Washington Matthews, a collaborator of the Smithsonian Institution, in 1873 published a short account of the Gros Ventres people, together with a partial grammar and dictionary of the language.¹ This work is highly commended by the great linguist, Max Müller, who made use of it in writing his book on 'The Origin and Growth of Religion.' The words for *bird* and *woman* are given in place in this dictionary. We thus get for the name, *The Bird Woman*, *Tsakaka-wias*, the dotted *í* at the end standing for *sh* in English, and making the compound word a proper name. It is equivalent to the definitive

¹ Matthews, *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidasta Indians*. Department of the Interior, United States Geological and Geographical Survey, Miscellaneous Publications, No. 7. (Washington, 1877.)

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article *the*. Anglicizing this a little, to suit those using only the English alphabet and unfamiliar with the scientific sound of vowels, and leaving off the initial *t* sound, which is hard for English tongues, we have the spelling in English, Saka'-kawea. During the last thirty years I have made numerous additions in manuscript to Matthews's book, and also some corrections, but I have no occasion to correct the words in question."

It is now, of course, too late to give the intrepid Indian heroine her Shoshone name, Bo-i'-naiv, Grass Maiden, or her Minnetaree name, Tsaka'-ka-wiaš. As Lewis and Clark wrote her name in their "Journal," and as it is inscribed upon the various statues that have been erected in honor of her, so must it remain, Sacajawea.

Too much credit cannot be given Dr. Hebard for bringing to light the later life of the heroine. But for her, we never should have known what became of Sacajawea after she left the Missouri. Once upon the trail of her later life, Dr. Hebard spent several years in tracing it out, in interviewing all who knew her, and her resulting story of it all is a most valuable contribution to American history.

Well, as my Blackfeet people say:—

HERE MY STORY ENDS



APPENDIX

SACAJAWEA

(From the Lewis and Clark Journal)

THE extracts from the "Journal," given below, include all that the great explorers had to say about Sacajawea. They are from what I consider the best of all the various editions of the famous "Journal," the one edited by the late Elliot Coues and published by Francis P. Harper, New York, in 1893.

Fort Mandan. November 11, 1804. The weather is cold. We received the visit of two squars (Sacajawea and another), prisoners from the Rock (Rocky) mountains, purchased by Chaboneau. The Mandans are at this time out hunting buffalo.

Fort Mandan. February 11, 1805. . . . About five o'clock one of the wives of Chaboneau was delivered of a boy; this being her first child she was suffering considerably, when Mr. Jessaume told Captain Lewis that he had frequently administered to persons in her situation a small dose of the rattle of the rattlesnake, which had never failed to hasten delivery. Having some of the rattle, Captain Lewis gave it to Mr. Jessaume, who crumbled two of the rings of it between his fingers, and mixing it with a small quantity of water gave it to her. What effect it may really have had it might be difficult to determine, but Captain Lewis was informed that she had not taken it more than ten minutes before the delivery took place.

Fort Mandan. April 7, 1805. . . . Having made all our arrangements [for resuming the journey to the Pacific

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Ocean], we left the fort about five o'clock in the afternoon. . . . The two interpreters were George Drewyer and Tous-saint Chaboneau. The wife (Sacajawea) of Chaboneau accompanied us with her young child, and we hope may be useful as an interpreter among the Snake Indians. She was herself one of that tribe, but having been taken in war by the Minnetarees, she was sold as a slave to Chaboneau, who brought her up and afterward married her. . . .

May 14. [Following the account of an encounter with a bear]. . . . The bear was old and the meat tough, so that the hunters took the skin only, and rejoined us at camp, where we had been much terrified by an accident of a different kind.

This was the narrow escape of one of the canoes, containing all of our papers, instruments, medicine, and almost every article indispensable for the success of our enterprise. The canoe being under sail, a sudden squall of wind struck her obliquely and turned her considerably. The man at the helm (Chaboneau), who was unluckily the worst steersman in the party, became alarmed, and instead of putting her before the wind luffed her up into it. The wind was so high that it forced the brace of the square-sail out of the hand of the man who was attending to it, and instantly upset the canoe, which would have been turned bottom upward but for the resistance made by the awning. Such was the confusion on board, and the waves ran so high, that it was half a minute before she righted, and then was nearly full of water; but by bailing out she was kept from sinking until she reached the shore. Besides the loss of the lives of three men, who not being able to swim would probably have perished, we should have been deprived of nearly everything necessary for our purposes, at a distance of 2,000 to 3,000 miles from any place where we could supply the deficiency.

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Note by Captain Lewis: "Which . . . I cannot recollect but with the utmost trepidation and horror . . . it happened unfortunately for us this evening that Chaboneau was at the helm of this perogue, instead of Drewyer. . . . Chaboneau cannot swim and is perhaps the most timid waterman in the world . . . the pirogue had then righted but had filled within an inch of the gunwales; Chaboneau still crying to his god for mercy, but had not recollected the rudder, nor could the repeated orders of the bowsman, Crusat, bring him to recollection until he threatened to shoot him if he did not instantly take hold of the rudder and do his duty. The Indian woman, to whom I ascribe equal fortitude and resolution with any person on board at the time of the accident, caught and preserved most of the light articles which were washed overboard."

May 20, 1805. . . . About five miles up from the mouth of the Musselshell is a handsome river, discharging from the west side, which we named after Chaboneau's wife, Sacajawea's or Bird Woman's river.

June 16, 1805. (At the Great Falls of the Missouri.) Since leaving Maria's river the wife of our interpreter, Chaboneau, has been dangerously ill, but she now has found relief from the water of the sulphur spring. It is situated about two hundred yards from the Missouri, into which it empties over a precipice of rock about twenty-five feet high. The water is perfectly transparent, strongly impregnated with sulphur, and we suspect iron also, as the color of the hills and bluffs in the neighborhood indicates the presence of that metal. . . .

June 19. . . . Our poor Indian woman, who had recovered so far as to walk out, imprudently ate a quantity of the white-apple (*Psoralea esculenta*), which, with some dried fish, occasioned a return of her fever. . . . I rebuked Chaboneau severely for suffering her to indulge herself in such

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food, he being privy to it, and having been told previously what she must only eat. . . .

June 28. . . . Captain Clark went on to the falls, accompanied by his servant, York, Chaboneau, and his wife and young child.

On his arrival there he observed a very dark cloud rising in the west, which threatened rain, and looked around for some shelter; but could find no place where the party would be secure from being blown into the river, if the wind should prove as violent as it sometimes does in the plains. At length, about a quarter of a mile above the falls, he found a deep ravine, where there were some shelving rocks under which he took shelter. They were on the upper side of the ravine, near the river, perfectly safe from rain, and therefore laid down their guns, compass, and other articles which they carried with them. The shower was at first moderate; then it increased to a heavy rain, the effects of which they did not feel; but soon afterward a torrent of rain and hail descended. The rain seemed to fall in a solid mass, and instantly, collecting in the ravine, came rolling down in a dreadful current, carrying the mud, rocks, and everything that opposed it. Captain Clark fortunately saw it a moment before it reached them, and springing up with his gun and shot pouch in his left hand, with his right clambered up the bluff, pushing on the Indian woman with the child in her arms. Her husband, too, had seized her hand and was pulling her up the hill, but he was so terrified at the danger that he frequently remained motionless, and but for Captain Clark, himself and wife and child would have been lost. So instantaneous was the rise of water that, before Captain Clark had reached his gun and begun to ascend the bank, the water was up to his waist, and he could scarcely get up faster than it rose, until it reached a height of fifteen feet, with a furious current, which, had

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they waited a moment longer, would have swept them into the river just above the Great Falls, down which they must inevitably been precipitated. They reached the plain in safety and found York, who had separated from them just before the storm to hunt some buffalo, and was now returning to his master. They had been obliged to escape so rapidly that Captain Clark lost his compass and umbrella, Chaboneau left his gun, with Captain Lewis's wiping rod, and shot pouch and tomahawk, and the Indian woman had just time to grasp her child, before the net in which it lay at her feet was carried down the current.

July 28. In Camp on Jefferson River, one mile above its confluence with the Madison. . . . Sacajawea, our Indian woman, informs us that we are camped upon the precise spot where her countrymen, the Snake Indians, had their huts five years ago, when the Minnetarees of Knife river first came in sight of them, and from which they hastily retreated three miles up the Jefferson, and concealed themselves in the woods. The Minnetarees, however, pursued and attacked them, killed four men, as many women and a number of boys, and made prisoners of four other boys, and all the females, of whom Sacajawea was one. She does not, however, show any distress at these recollections, or any joy at the prospect of being restored to her country; for she seems to possess the folly or the philosophy of not suffering her feelings to extend beyond the anxiety of having plenty to eat and a few trinkets to wear.

July 30. On the Jefferson, a few miles above camp of July 28. . . . The islands are very numerous. On the right are high plains, occasionally forming cliffs of rocks and hills; while the left is an extensive low ground and prairie, intersected by a number of bayous or channels falling into the stream. Captain Lewis, who had walked through it with Chaboneau, his wife, and two invalids, joined us at

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dinner, a few miles above our camp. Here the woman said was the place where she had been maner. The men being too few to contend with the tares, mounted their horses and fled as soon as they began. The women and children dispersed, and Sacajawea, as she was crossing at a shoal place, was over in the middle of the river by her pursuers. . . .

August 8. . . . On our right is the high point of which our Indian woman recognizes as the place the Beaver's Head, from a supposed resemblance to the object. This, she says, is not far from the summer residence of her countrymen, which is on the river beyond the mountains, running to the west. She is therefore certain we shall meet them either on this river, or on that immediately west of its source, which, judging from its size, can not be far distant. Persuaded of the necessity of procuring horses to cross the mountains, we determined that one of us should proceed in the morning to the head of the river, and penetrate the mountains to find the Shoshones, or some other nation, who would assist us in transporting our baggage, the greater part of which we should be compelled to leave, without the horses.

August 9. . . . Immediately after breakfast, Lewis took Drewyer, Shields, and M'Neal, and their knapsacks they set out with a resolution to find some nation of Indians before they returned, however they might be separated from the party. . . .

August 14. Note by Captain Clark: "I checked the interpreter for striking his woman at their dinner."

August 17. . . . On setting out at seven o'clock, Clark, with Chaboneau and his wife, walked on when they had not gone more than a mile when Captain Clark saw Sacajawea, who was with her husband 10

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ahead, begin to dance and show every mark of the most extravagant joy, turning round to him and pointing to several Indians, whom he now saw advancing on horseback, sucking her fingers at the same time, to indicate that they were of her native tribe. As they advanced Captain Clark discovered among them Drewyer dressed like an Indian, from whom he learned the situation of the (Lewis) party. While the boats were performing the circuit, he went toward the forks with the Indians, who, as they went along, sang with the greatest appearance of delight.

We soon drew near the camp, and just as we approached it a woman made her way through the crowd toward Sacajawea; recognizing each other, they embraced with the most tender affection. The meeting of these two young women had in it something peculiarly touching, not only from the ardent manner in which their feelings were expressed, but also from the real interest of their situation. They had been companions in childhood; in the war with the Minnetarees they had both been taken prisoners in the same battle; they had shared and softened the rigors of their captivity till one of them had escaped from the Minnetarees, with scarce a hope of ever seeing her friend relieved from the hands of her enemies. While Sacajawea was renewing among the women the friendship of former days, Captain Clark went on and was received by Captain Lewis and the chief (Too-et-te-con'l Black Gun? Bow? is his war name Ka-me-ah-wah — or Come and Smoke. I was called by this name afterward. Clark.) who, after the first embraces and salutations were over, conducted him to a sort of circular shade or tent of willows. Here he was seated on a white robe, and the chief immediately tied in his hair six small shells resembling pearls, an ornament highly valued by these people, who procure them in the course of trade from the sea-coast. The moccasins of the

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whole party were then taken off, and after much ceremony the smoke began. After this the conference was to be opened. Glad of an opportunity to be able to converse more intelligibly, Sacajawea was sent for; she came into the tent, sat down, and was beginning to interpret, when, in the person of Cameahwait, she recognized her brother. She instantly jumped up, and ran and embraced him, throwing over him her blanket, and weeping profusely. The chief himself was moved, though not in the same degree. After some conversation between them she resumed her seat and attempted to interpret for us; but her new situation seemed to overpower her, and she was frequently interrupted by her tears. After the council was finished the unfortunate woman learned that all her family was dead except two brothers, one of whom was absent, and a son of her eldest sister, a small boy, who was immediately adopted by her.

August 24. . . . They now said that they had no more horses for sale; and as we now had nine of our own, two hired horses, and a mule, we began loading them as heavily as was prudent, placing the rest on the shoulders of the Indian women, and left our camp at twelve o'clock. We were all on foot, except Sacajawea, for whom her husband had purchased a horse with some articles which we gave him for that purpose.

August 25. . . . While at dinner we learned by means of Sacajawea that the young men who left us this morning carried a request from their chief that the village would break camp and meet this party to-morrow, when they would all go down the Missouri into the buffalo country. Alarmed at this new caprice of the Indians, which, if not counteracted, threatened to leave ourselves and our baggage in the mountains, or even if we reached the waters of the Columbia, to prevent our obtaining horses, to go fur-

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ther, Captain Lewis immediately called the three chiefs together. After smoking a pipe he asked if they were men of their word, and if we could rely on their promises. They readily answered in the affirmative. He then asked if they had not agreed to assist us in carrying our baggage over the mountains. To this also they answered yes. "Why, then," said he, "have you requested your people to meet us to-morrow where it will be impossible for us to trade for horses, as you promised we should? If," he continued, "you had not promised to help us in transporting our goods across the mountains, we should not have attempted it, but have returned down the river; after which no white men would ever have come into your country. If you wish the whites to be your friends, to bring you arms, and to protect you from your enemies, you should never promise what you do not intend to perform. When I first met you, you doubted what I said, yet you afterward saw that I told you the truth. How, therefore, can you doubt what I tell you now? You see that I divide amongst you the meat which my hunters kill and I promise to give to all who assist us a share of whatever we have to eat. If, therefore, you intend to keep your promise, send one of your young men immediately, to order the people to remain at the village until we arrive." The two inferior chiefs then said that they had wished to keep their word to assist us; that they had not sent for the people, but on the contrary had disapproved of that measure, which was done wholly by the first chief. Cameahwait remained silent for a long time; at last he said that he knew that he had done wrong, but that, seeing his people all in want of provisions, he had wished to hasten their departure for the country where their wants might be supplied. He, however, now declared that, having passed his word, he would never violate it, and counter-orders were immediately sent to the village

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by a young man, to whom we gave a handkerchief, in order to insure dispatch and fidelity. This matter being adjusted, our march was now resumed with an unusual degree of alacrity on the part of the Indians. We passed a spot, where, six years ago, the Shoshones suffered a very severe defeat from the Minnetarees; and late in the evening we reached the upper part of the cove, where the creek enters the mountains.

August 26. . . . The infant daughters (of the Shoshone) are often betrothed by the father to men who are grown, either for themselves or their sons. Sacajawea had been contracted for in this manner before she had been taken prisoner, and when we brought her back her betrothed was still living. Although he was double her age and had two other wives, he claimed her; but on finding that she had a child by her new husband, Chaboneau, he relinquished his claims and said he did not want her.

November 3. . . . [In camp opposite what is now Fisher's Landing, on the Columbia.] A canoe soon arrived from the village at the foot of the last rapid, with an Indian and his family, consisting of a wife, three children, and a woman who had been taken a prisoner from the Snake Indians, living on a river from the south, which we afterward found to be the Multnomah. Sacajawea was immediately introduced to her, in hopes that, being a Snake Indian, they might understand one another; but their language was not sufficiently intelligible to enable them to converse together.

November 7. . . . We had not gone far from this village when the fog cleared off, and we enjoyed the delightful prospect of the ocean — that ocean, the object of all our labors, the reward of all our anxieties. This cheering view exhilarated the spirits of all the party, who were still more delighted on hearing the distant roar of the breakers. (Lewis.)

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... Ocian in view! O! the joy! (Clark.)

November 20. Approaching a Chinook village. . . . When we arrived there we found many Chinooks; two of them being chiefs, we went through the ceremony of giving each a medal, and to the most distinguished a flag. Their names were Comcomly and Chillahlawil. One of the Indians had a robe made of two sea-otter skins, the fur of which was the most beautiful we had ever seen. But the owner at first resisted every temptation to part with it, but at last could not resist the offer of a belt of blue beads which Chaberneau's wife wore around her waist.

November 30. . . . Several of the men complain of disorders of their bowels, which can be ascribed only to their diet of pounded fish mixed with salt water. Sacajawea gave me a piece of bread made of flour which she had reserved for her child and carefully kept until this time, which had unfortunately got wet and a little sour — this bread I ate with great satisfaction, it being the only mouthful I had tasted for several months past. (Clark.)

December 24. . . . I received a present of Captain Lewis of a shirt, drawers, and socks; a pair of moccasins of Goodrich, and two dozen white weasel tails from Sacajawea.

January 5. . . . The finding of the whale on the beach seemed to be a matter of importance to all the Indians, and as we might be able to procure some of it for ourselves, or at least purchase blubber from the Indians, a small parcel of merchandise was prepared, and a party of the men held in readiness to set out in the morning. As soon as this resolution was known, Chaboneau and his wife requested that they might be allowed to accompany us. The poor woman stated very earnestly that she had traveled a great way with us to see the great water, yet she had never been down to the coast, and now that this monstrous fish was

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also to be seen, it seemed hard that she should be permitted to see neither the ocean nor the whale. So reasonable request could not be denied; they were therefore suffered to accompany Captain Clark.

April 22. On Des Chutes River. . . . Being now confident that the Indians had taken the robe, I sent Sacajawea on to request Captain Clark to halt the party and send back some of the men to my assistance, being determined to either make the Indians deliver the robe, or to burn their houses.

April 28. . . . Fortunately there was among these Wallawala Indians a prisoner belonging to a tribe of Shoshone, or Snake Indians, residing to the south of the Multnomah, and visiting occasionally the heads of Wallawalla creek. Our Shoshone woman, Sacajawea, though she belonged to a tribe near the Missouri, spoke the same language as the prisoner; by their means we were able to explain ourselves to the Indians, and answer all their questions with respect to ourselves and the object of our journey. Our conversation inspired them with much confidence, and they soon brought several sick persons, for whom they requested our assistance.

July 1. . . . Captain Lewis, with nine men, is to pursue the most direct route to the falls of the Missouri. Captain Clark, with his ten men, and Sacajawea, will proceed to the Yellowstone at its nearest approach to the Three Forks of the Missouri.

July 6. . . . In the afternoon we passed along the hillside north of the creek, till, in the course of six miles, we entered an extensive plain. Here the tracks of the Indians scattered so much that we could no longer pursue the road; but Sacajawea recognized the plain immediately. She had traveled it often in her childhood, and informed us that it was the great resort of the Shoshones, who came for the

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purpose of taking quamash and cows, and of beaver, with which the plain abounded; that Glade Creek was a branch of Wisdom River; and that on reaching the highest part of the plain we should see a gap in the mountains on the course to our canoes, and from that gap a high point of mountain covered with snow.

July 14. . . . Sacajawea now assured Captain Clark that the large road from Medicine (Sun) river to the gap (Bozeman Pass) they were seeking crossed the upper part of this plain. . . . On crossing the southern branch (Bozeman creek), they fell into the great road described by the squaw. . . .

August 17. The principal chiefs of the Minnetarees came down to bid us farewell, as none of them could be prevailed upon to go with us. This circumstance induced our interpreter, Chaboneau, with his wife and child, to remain here, as he could be no longer useful. Notwithstanding our offers to take him to the United States he said that he had there no acquaintance and no chance of making a livelihood; and that he preferred remaining with the Indians. This man has been very serviceable to us, and his wife was particularly useful among the Shoshonees. Indeed, she has borne with a patience truly admirable the fatigues of so long a route, encumbered with the charge of an infant, who is even now only 19 months old. We therefore paid Charboneau his wages, amounting to \$500.33, including the price of a horse and lodge purchased of him.

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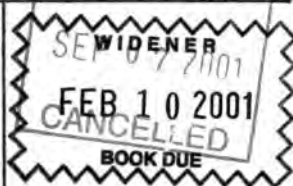


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